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Perception as Predictor of Social Media Utilization by Librarians in Universities in Southern Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

The emergence of social media as an interactive technology into the global communication scene has altered information methodologies and approaches. And the library as an organization dedicated to information organization, management and dissemination has been affected by this technology. Today, the nature of gathering information has switched from one that was face-to face to one that is virtual through the use of computers connected to the Internet. Turkle (2008) noted that "these web-based communication technologies have collided during the past decade resulting in a metaphoric paradigm shift that has permanently altered human discourse".

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content". This means with the use of social network sites, people all over the world can now relate without any boundaries or geographical restrictions while creating profiles and web based content that can be easily shared.

In developed countries and some developing nations, the rate of utilization of social media in libraries has been found to be very high. From Tailor and Francis survey of librarians in the UK, USA and India, over 70% of libraries are using social media tools, and 60% have had a social media account for three years or longer. Also 30% of librarians are posting at least daily (Tailor and Francis, 2014). The survey equally showed that libraries use social media to fulfil a range of objectives, with most focused on promotion (visibility for and usage of the library service and resources). However, broadcast/informational communications are increasingly being supplemented with two-way communications designed to solicit feedback (e.g. for collection development), offer real-time customer service and build engagement with users.

In Nigerian university libraries, Olajide and Oyeniran (2014) reported that the level of awareness of social media use for library service delivery has appreciated. In terms of Utilization of social media in Nigerian university libraries, it has been reported in some recent studies that meaningful progress has been made, however, this still falls below the standard obtainable in libraries in developed nations (Eke, Omekwu & Odoh,

2014, Akporhonor and Olise, 2015, Quadri & Idowu, 2016). There are several factors that could be responsible for the slow pace of utilization of social media by Nigerian librarians. This study seeks to investigate the extent to which perception of librarians could be a predictor of their utilization of social media. Studies have shown that perception is a factor to consider when exploring technology adoption (Kumar, Rose, & D'SIiva, 2008).

Perception is basically how people feel towards a thing or system. In this sense, the way people react or accept a circumstance or object is determined partly by their perception. According to Davis (1989), users' acceptance of a given technology is affected by their perceptions on the usefulness and ease-of-use of that technology. TAM was initially designed by Davis (1989) for Information Technology systems within the context of organizational job performance but it has been used to study different types of technologies including social media.

Perceived usefulness was defined by Davis (1989) as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance" (Davis, 1989) and perceived ease-of-use of a system was also defined by Davis (1989) as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort". The core questions this study aims to answer are: to what extent does perception of librarians determine their utilization of social media in the workplace? Does perception significantly predict social media utilization for information service delivery by librarians?

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and null hypotheses will guide the study:

- **Research Question 1:** To what extent does librarians' perceived ease of use of social media predict social media utilization for information service delivery?

- **Hypothesis 1**: Perceived ease of use does not significantly predict utilization of social media for information service delivery

- **Research question 2:** To extent does librarians' perceived usefulness of social media predict social media utilization for information service delivery

- **Hypothesis 2:** Perceived usefulness does not significantly predict utilization of social media for information service delivery

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Perceptions and sensing represent a unique source of how to experience something at all (Demuth, 2013). Perception equally refers to the organization, identification, and interpretation of information in order to represent and understand the environment. It is basically how people feel towards a thing or system. In this sense, the way people react or accept a circumstance or object is determined partly by their perception. According to Davis (1989), users' acceptance of a given technology is affected by their perceptions on the usefulness and ease-of-use of that technology. TAM was initially designed by Davis (1989) for Information Technology systems within the context of organizational job performance but it has been used to study different types of technologies including social media.

Perceived usefulness was defined by Davis (1989) as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance" (Davis, 1989) and perceived ease-of-use of a system was also defined by Davis (1989) as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort" (Davis, 1989, Chrysostomou and Mousoulides, 2009, Jones, 2004). Perception has been seen as a major determinant of new technologies adoption by professionals in various disciples. How people perceive a system to be useful and easy to use majorly affect their attitude towards the system and this determine whether they will adopt it or not.

When considering adoption of a new technologies the technical aspects are critically considered, and this is sum up in perceived ease of use. Until a group of people perceive a system to be easy to use they may likely not take the decision to adopt it. Perceived ease of use deals with the technical requirement of using a new system. It refers to how a person feels a new system will be easy to use. This may have nothing to do with reality but research has shown that if a person feels a system will be difficult to use, they will most likely will not adopt the system.

Perception has been generally believed to be a person's feeling towards a system or an object. Perceptions therefore represents a unique source of how to experience something at all. (Demuth, 2013). Perceptions plays important roles in understanding

the reasons people use or refuse to use of social media (Seegaard, 2015). In terms of technology, the concept of perception was primarily first research by Davis in 1985. The study led to the development of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) which was latter reviewed in 1989 and has since become the most used model in studying factors affecting technology acceptance. In building the TAM, Davis (1989) divided perception into two, that is, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. According to him, perceived ease of use deals with the technical requirement of using a new system. It refers to how a person feels a new system will be easy to use while perceived usefulness refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance. Thus, situating perception as key variable in understanding the underlying reasons people use or refuse emerging technologies.

According to the TAM, a user's perceptions about a system's usefulness and ease of use result in an intention to use or not use the system (Venkatesh, 2000). This has been found to be true by several studies (Picardo, 2011, Elkaseh, Wong & Fung, 2016). Smith and Spiers (2009) reported extensively how perception affects adoption of new system using an e-commerce setting. All these studies re-iterate the theoretical assumption of TAM. As noted by Chan-Otmsted, Cho and Lee (2013), users' perceptions of a system play key role its adoption and use irrespective of the setting.

The relevance of perceived usefulness in the adoption of new technologies has been widely studied in various sectors (Guriting and Ndubisi, 2006; Laforet and Li, 2005). Several studies have re-iterated the fact that perceived ease of use is the extent to which a person accepts as true that using a new system will not be difficult to understand, learn or operate. This confirms Sago (2013) who noted that Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use has been found to also be a determinant of adoption and acceptance of technology.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

In understanding the reason people accept new technologies or reject them, several factors have been identified. As reported by several studies (Angel & Sexsmith, 2009; Boyd & Ellison, 2007), these factors are both internal and external. In a bid to understand how these factors interconnect and relate to predict or determine attitude towards technology and acceptance of technology has given birth to several theories that now serve as guide for studies in the area of technology acceptance. This study the adopted Technology acceptance model (TAM) to understand the role perception plays in the adoption and utilization of social media for information service

Davis (1989) proposed TAM to explain why a user accepts or rejects information technology by adapting Theory of Reasoned Action. TAM provides a basis with which one traces how external variables influence belief, attitude, and intention to use. Two cognitive beliefs are posited by TAM: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. According to TAM, one's actual use of a technology system is influenced directly or indirectly by the user's behavioral intentions, attitude, perceived usefulness of the system, and perceived ease of the system.

The primary assumption of TAM is that a person's intention to use technology is a function of his attitude to towards the particular technology. This attitude as noted by Davis (1991) is a function of two beliefs: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Perceived ease of use has causal effect on perceived usefulness. Also system design features have a direct effect on perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness; and an indirect effect on attitude. Theory of Acceptance Model (TAM) basically "posits that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use determine an individual's intention to use a system with intention to use serving as a mediator of actual system use" (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

Perception is explained based on this theory as the way people view or feel towards the use of information technologies in their daily lives and workplaces. These views are usually predicted by the behavioral elements- "perceived usefulness" and "ease of use" (Davis, 1989; Davis, 1991; Venkatesh, 2000 and Venkatesh et al, 2003).

TAM was deemed suitable for this study because it effectively measures perception as it relates to technology utilization. TAM has been shown to successfully explain utilization behavior of different information systems and technologies including social media (Al-Rahimi, Othman & Musa, 2013, Park, Kee, and Valenzuela,2009, Park, 2009, Awa, Emecheta and Ukoha 2014). The elements of TAM adapted for this study are those relating to perception, that is, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. Some of the studies that have used these two constructs from the TAM include Karahanna and Straub, 1999; Koufaris, 2003; Wixom and Todd, 2005, Jahangi and Begum, 2008.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the Correlational survey design. Correlational design establishes the type of relationships that exist between or among two or more variables. Correctional studies usually aim to determine whether, and to what degree, a

relationship exist between two or more variables (Egbokare, Itiola, Odejide and Olayinka, 2006). Correlational survey design is considered suitable for this study because the researcher aims to establish the relationship and the predictive value of the variables of the study. The population of the study comprise all the one hundred and seventy-four (174) professional librarians working in the libraries at the six (6) Federal government-owned universities in South-South Nigeria (Source: NUC, and Administrative offices of the libraries). Due to the manageable size of the population, no sampling was done. The researcher used total enumeration technique to cover all the one hundred and seventy-four (174) professional librarians working in the six libraries.

The questionnaire was the instrument used for collecting data for the study. The instrument was subjected to face validity by three professionals. The Cronbach alpha method was used to establish the internal consistency of the items. The test yielded overall reliability score of 0.92 which is high enough to consider the instrument reliable and internally consistent to be utilized for the study. Pearson *r* and *R2* was used to answer the research questions to determine the extent to which the variables of the study are related while the null hypotheses were tested with the use of linear regression analysis to predict the value of the variables. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data were organized under the research questions and hypotheses of the study.

Research Question 1: To what extent does librarians' perceived ease of use of social media predict social media utilization for information service delivery?

The result in Table 1 showed that the correlation coefficient obtained was 0.341. This means that, there exist a low direct positive relationship between librarians' perceived ease of use of social media and utilization of social media for information service delivery. Table 1 equally shows that, the coefficient of determination (r^2) associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.341 was 0.289. This coefficient of determination (r^2) indicates that perceived ease of use of social media accounted for about 30% of

utilization of social media for information service delivery. This is an indication that 70% of utilization of social media for information service delivery is attributed to other factors not studied. It is therefore clear that perceived ease of use moderately predicts utilization of social media for information service delivery.

Hypothesis 1: Perceived ease of use do not significantly predict utilization of social media for information service delivery

In order to test hypothesis 1 (H_{O1}), regression analysis was used. The result in the table 2 shows that an F-ratio of 3.091 with associated exact probability value of 0.000 was obtained. This exact probability value of 0.000 was less than 0.05 level of significance set as benchmark for testing the hypothesis and it was found to be significant. The null hypothesis was therefore, rejected and inference drawn was that, was that librarians' perceived ease of use of social media significantly predicts utilization of social media for information service delivery.

Research question 2: To extent does librarians' perceived usefulness of social media predict social media utilization for information service delivery

The result in Table 3 showed that the correlation coefficient obtained was 0.171. This means that, there exist a low direct positive relationship between librarians' perceived usefulness of social media and utilization of social media for information service delivery. Table 3 equally shows that, the coefficient of determination (r^2) associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.171 was 0.114. This coefficient of determination (r^2) indicates that perceived usefulness of social media accounted for 11% of utilization of social media for information service delivery. This is an indication that 89% of utilization of social media for information service delivery is attributed to other factors not studied. Therefore, perceived usefulness of social media predicts utilization of social media for information service delivery to a little extent.

Hypothesis 2: perceived usefulness does not significantly predict utilization of social media for information service delivery

In order to test hypothesis 2 (H_{O2}), regression analysis was used. The result in the table 4 shows that an F-ratio of 0.982 with associated exact probability value of 0.484 was obtained. This exact probability value of 0.484 was greater than 0.05 level of significance set as benchmark for testing the hypothesis and it was found not to be

significant. The null hypothesis was therefore, accepted and inference drawn was that, librarians' perceived usefulness of social media does not significantly predict their utilization of social media for information service delivery.

Discussion of Findings

The findings on Research question one revealed the extent to which perceived ease of use of social media by librarians predict their use of social media for information service delivery in libraries. The findings on Table 1 revealed that perceived ease of use to a moderate extent predicts the utilization of social media for information service delivery by librarians in Federal University libraries in South-South, Nigeria. Also Table 2 on Hypothesis 1 reveals that perceived ease of use significantly predicts utilization of social media for information service delivery by librarians. This finding is consonance with the finding of Bwiino, Kituyi and Musense (2016) who found that perceived ease of use significantly predicts social media use. Other studies (Jahangir and Begum, 2008, Elkaseh, Wong and Fund, 2016, Dzandu, Boateng, Agyemang and Quansah, 2016, Sasithanakornkaew, 2017) equally reported that perceived ease of use of social media significantly predict its utilization among different categories of users.

The findings on Research question two revealed the extent to which perceived usefulness of social media by librarians predict their use of social media for information service delivery in libraries. The findings on Table 3 revealed that perceived usefulness to a little extent predicts the utilization of social media for information service delivery by librarians in Federal University libraries in South-South, Nigeria. Also, Table 4 on Hypothesis 2 reveals that perceived usefulness does not significantly predict utilization of social media for information service delivery by librarians. This finding is similar to the findings of Wiid, Cant, and Nell (2014) who found that perceived usefulness does not contribute significantly to the use of social media. The finding is, however, in contrast to several studies (Elkaseh, Wong and Fund, 2016, Davis, 1989, Milero and Adeyeye, 2013, Dzandu, Boateng, Agyemong and Quansah, 2016).

The implication of the findings of this study is that when considering the extent perception predict social use by librarians in university libraries in Southern Nigeria, the aspect that matters is the perceived ease of use. This implies that the technical aspects predict user behaviour with regards to social media.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study it was recommended that:

- Library administrators should organize social media workshops were the technicalities of social media will be taught. This workshop should be facilitated by people who are not just technicians but practicing librarians. This will build confidence in the librarians to overcome their technical fears about social media use.

- The librarians should be given opportunity for practical use of social media in the workplace. Apart from workshops and trainings, the librarians should be given the time and tasks that require the use of social media. This regular practical use will, over the time, help the librarians to conquer their technical fears about social media.

- Social media developers should work on making the technical aspects of social media less complicated. The easier the interface of the social medial platform the more it will be used by professionals. This can be achieved when the back-end programmers work with the professionals who use the technologies to design an easy to use interface.

- The library administrators should keep promoting social media use for library service delivery. This could be achieved by adding certain incentives to the use of social media for information service. The incentives could be in form of promotion points, annual financial bonuses or recognition.

CONCLUSION

The 21st century librarian has been gifted with many technological tools that facilitate information dissemination. Social media is one of those technologies that holds great potentials especially for the Nigerian librarian. The utilization of social media for information service delivery depends on several factors, and paramount among these factors is perception. The perception of the ease of use and usefulness are critical for determining attitudes towards adoption. While this study has revealed that perceived usefulness does not significantly predict social media utilization, it, however, revealed that perceive ease of use is significant in predicting social media use. For Nigerian librarians to effectively utilize social media, their perception of the technical aspects of social media must be addressed. Library managers should take this fact into consideration in their planning, otherwise Nigerian librarians will continue to miss the

opportunities social media brings into information service delivery in the 21st century. This will further relegate the image of the Nigerian librarian as backward and not technology savvy.

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