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Utilizing Social Media to Improve Relationship Quality: The Case of the University Library

Melissa N. Clark and Scott D. Bacon

Abstract

As the center of academic life at a university, the university library plays an important role in how students perceive their relationship with the university. This study analyzes the effect that participation in library social media has on student perception of relationship quality with the university. The hypotheses proposed in this study were found to be substantiated: Following the library on social media is positively related to a student's perception of their relationship quality with the university; students interested in multiple library services are likely to report the perception of a higher quality relationship with the university.

Keywords

university, social media, marketing, library, higher education, facebook, twitter, instagram, pinterest, google+, yik yak, tumblr, snapchat, youtube

Introduction

In today's world of digital communication, marketers know that utilizing social media platforms to create lasting high quality relationships with customers is a successful way to build a loyal following. This concept holds true in higher education as well since higher education marketers seek to recruit, retain, and satisfy students as well as turn them into loyal alumni after graduation. One way to build such high quality relationships within the university community is

to communicate regularly with students through social media platforms. Today's college students are primarily digital natives and frequently use multiple social media platforms. By tapping into this channel, higher education marketers have a viable outlet that could be used to build a long-lasting relationship with their audience.

Marketing researchers have been studying relationship quality for decades. It is a well-known and established construct that is the building block of the study of relationship marketing. This study brings that concept together with research on the university library and higher education marketing as a unique contribution to the non-business literature. This study brings together various areas of the university and literature streams to investigate a relevant issue for university and department marketers.

The university library is the hub for information and a critical resource for students. Since the university library is such a vital part of the academic life of an institution, it makes sense that efforts to increase engagement between the library and the student body would also impact how students view the university as a whole. They are enrolled to better themselves through education and the university library is the source through which much of the information needed for their education is gathered. For these reasons, it makes sense that librarians intending to market their services and connect with students would utilize social media platforms. University marketers would be interested to know how this type of engagement would impact students' overall relationship with the university. Therefore, this study aims to explore the issue of how student engagement with a university library through social media impacts their perceived relationship quality with the university.

Theoretical Development and Hypotheses

Social Media Marketing

Social media is a dynamic tool for today's marketers due to the interactive nature of communication as well as the diverse and ever-changing platforms. It has dramatically changed the way members of the marketplace interact with one another. By definition, social media is "the democratization of information, transforming people from content readers into publishers. It is the shift from a broadcast mechanism, one-to-many, to a many-to-many model, rooted in conversations between authors, people, and peers" (Solis, 2011, p.21). At its core, social media marketing is a public and visible form of word-of-mouth marketing. Word-of-mouth communications are extremely valuable to marketers because they are more effective marketing than company-sponsored messages. This type of interactive conversation is housed on different platforms known as social network sites (SNSs). They are, "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (Boyd and Ellison, 2008, p.211).

The technology behind social media is fairly recent, but the foundations of community and socialization are not. These elements of social media have always been a part of the human experience. Theoretically, social media finds its origins in social exchange theory where exchanges are either direct (i.e. the marketer shares valuable information with the customer and the customer reciprocates with trust, loyalty, or commitment) or indirect (i.e. the marketer shares valuable information with the customer and the customer extends the resource to another customer) (Lévi-Strauss, 1969). This type of mutually beneficial exchange has the potential to improve the relationship quality between a marketer and a customer.

Recent research on social media has demonstrated attachment to social media (ASM) as a distinct concept that impacts consumers' behaviors on social media sites (VanMeter, Grisaffe and Chonko, 2015). Additionally, it has been said that consumer engagement could be heightened through social media experiences and this engagement strengthens the bond between the customer and organization (Hall-Phillips et al., 2016). Further, studies have indicated that online consumers who take part in a variety of social interaction activities are most likely to follow through with their intention to make a purchase (Wang and Yu, 2017; Wang and Hajli, 2014). Higher education marketers can make use of these recent findings by realizing that their students are attached to social media and use this for a positive purpose such as providing engaging experiences to strengthen the relationship with them as well as offering messages on a variety of platforms to increase positive outcomes such as retention.

Social Media Marketing in Higher Education

Institutions of higher education often focus their marketing communications on the quality of the education and on-campus experience they offer to prospective students. Most higher education institutions also use a variety of social media outlets to communicate with their audiences. They are efficiently able to connect with various stakeholders with specific and often unique content for each site. This type of communication can humanize the institution, making it seem more accessible. Academic libraries serve as the central location of information for the institution and are, therefore, a vitally important part of academic life. The university library can utilize social media platforms to educate students about library resources and services as well as promote those resources and services. Social media platforms can act as an effective marketing tool by extending outreach to and engagement with the users of these resources and services.

“The social media landscape creates opportunities for higher education institutions to amplify psychological engagement with students and to increase influence impressions by following student(s)-to-student(s) conversations and stories” (Bolat and O’Sullivan, 2017, p.742). In addition, social media can diminish physical, social and organizational barriers and facilitate student interaction with useful information. Research literature supports the use of social media to improve user perception of quality of life (Hyun, Ozkaya and LaRose, 2014) and social connectedness (Grieve et al., 2013). Junco (2012) found that use of social networking sites by students has a positive influence on their involvement in campus life. Student participation on university social media platforms has also been shown to lead to an increase in grade point averages (Junco, Heiberger and Loken, 2011). Neier and Zayer (2015) reported positive student perception of the use of social media in education. They found that students perceived professors and universities who use social media tools as more connected and willing to keep up with current trends. University departments have the potential to support quality of life and quality of education by increasing student engagement in online social networks.

Common audiences for university social media platforms include students, faculty, staff, alumni of the university and prospective students and family members (Foster and Bacon, 2013). Incoming freshmen are a common target audience for university social media platforms, considering that members of this market segment are new to the university and may have more motivation to get involved in university activities and services. Freshmen likely will stay for several years and then may unfollow university social media platforms after they graduate. Targeting freshmen provides the university the opportunity to build a relationship with students from the beginning of the educational experience. Recent research has shown support for the role

of social media marketing in customer relationship management effectiveness for recruitment and retention of students (Wali and Andy-Wali, 2018).

Administration of social media platforms varies across campuses, some institutions trending toward having fewer platforms to present a more streamlined and authoritative message, others allowing anyone with an affiliation to the university to create platforms and publish without restraint. Uniqueness and reach of content therefore vary in conjunction with social media administration practices across an institution. Positive benefits of having multiple active social media platforms on campus include cross-promotional activities, the linking of events online bringing two potential separate audiences together (Hooper and Scharf, 2012).

Overexposure is a potentially negative effect of having a large number of university-themed social media platforms. Desensitization and dilution of message can occur when students are faced with a flood of similar content. Content is often nearly identical as a result of the propensity of university platforms to share information with each other. Social media administrators should be encouraged to create unique and engaging content to catch students' attention, emphasizing the unique offerings of each college or department. Following and liking multiple university social media platforms creates a network of like-minded administrators who can work together to educate students through content iteration, and by filling in gaps other sites may have missed.

Library Marketing

Academic libraries are an extension of the university, and can utilize the mission and vision of the university to maintain consistency of message and establish guiding principles to inform their target audience (Miller, 2012). But libraries also provide services unique to the campus that help students accomplish various educational goals.

Libraries market not to gain profit but to satisfy the educational needs of students by informing them of resources and services (da Silva Araújo and da Silva, 2013). For this reason, library marketing strategies can vary widely from corporate marketing strategies, with funding and staffing issues being major obstacles to engagement and reach. Potter (2012) stresses that libraries should focus on providing value to users as a key concept for marketing libraries. Marketing of services rather than products enables libraries to help students achieve their needs in the most efficient way. Libraries provide a wealth of product, but librarians provide value in the specialized assistance required to locate the most useful product. The role librarians play as arbiters of the quality and trustworthiness of information has grown in an era of skepticism about the accuracy of information (Dalmer, 2017).

Social media use in libraries has not been studied significantly beyond its usage as a marketing tool for library resources, services and events, and the practice of tying social media sites to the overall library marketing strategy is atypical (Booker and Bandyopadhyay, 2013). Since the prime objective of library social media marketing is to gain exposure to an increasing number of users in order to inform them about library services (Young and Rossmann, 2015), advertising resources and services should be a fundamental component of a library's marketing strategy. Library resources and services encompass a variety of operations, from online databases, electronic resources and research guides to reference, instruction and circulation services. Computer workstations, printing and quiet study spaces are examples of other important service provided to patrons. Marketing these services through social media can increase usage of extant services as well as inform students of new library offerings.

Social media advertising campaigns are important factors in generating a large increase in likes and followers, which contributes to more interaction with library resources and services.

Chan (2012) found advertising through social media to be more cost-effective than other traditional means. However, even as technology threatens traditional marketing methods, Booker and Bandyopadhyay (2013) found that survey respondents preferred flyers posted in the library as a mode of communication, and traditional reference desk interactions are still a major factor in the marketing of library services (Masuchika, 2013). Libraries must strive to enact a variety of marketing strategies in order to reach the most students. Flyers in the library, email communication, social media advertising, and community building are among several marketing and outreach methods libraries can use to reach out to students.

To further extend outreach efforts libraries have experimented with providing services within social media platforms, such as using Twitter to provide virtual reference services (Fields, 2010; Filgo, 2013; Young, 2014). Additional research may surface the advantages and disadvantages of the practice of advertising a service and also providing that service on the same social media platform.

Some of the literature questions the use of social media in higher education, citing that students indicate they use social media platforms for social networking purposes and educational platforms for educational purposes (Burhanna, Seeholzer and Salem, 2009). Connell (2009) warned that some students see library outreach on social media as an intrusion into their private social networks. Relationship building can be used as an initial strategy, to be followed by the marketing of library services once student perception of library relevancy shifts (Phillips, 2011).

Social media platforms each exhibit strengths and weaknesses as marketing tools for university libraries. Facebook has a massive potential audience, ripe for relationship building, but the platform may be difficult to effectively use for marketing purposes due to the shifting nature of its development. The revision of algorithms makes it difficult to accurately predict how

many followers will see a library's post. Facebook often acts as an echo chamber for library staff instead of a tool for engagement with students (Gerolimos, 2011). Twitter makes it easier to build online communities by connecting groups with little mediation through the use of hashtags, but the sheer amount of information on Twitter can be overwhelming, and the limited shelf life of posts increases the difficulty of effective marketing. Compounding these issues, funding and staffing issues often force libraries to move at a glacial pace. These factors can contribute to less participation and engagement from potential users, as usage shifts to new platforms and the community goes with it.

However, libraries still see potential benefits in using social media to reach their student populations. Social media marketing should be one part of an overall marketing strategy for libraries. The relatively small, dedicated and engaged group of students who do find utility in social media can be served through both online and traditional library marketing efforts. Care will need to be taken to balance the embedded practices of online library communities while maintaining the privacy many students expect in their social networks. Libraries continue to seek opportunities to interact with students in social networks as a move away from the expectation that students must visit external library systems in order to interact with the library.

Managing the patron experience has become an important concept in the shift from broadly marketing services to individualizing the library experience. University libraries have used the customer relationship management philosophy as part of a larger effort at controlling the relationship between libraries and patrons (Broady-Preston, Felice, and Marshall, 2006; Masuchika, 2013; Fouad and Al-Goblan, 2017). Academic libraries need to manage long-term relationships with their customers to showcase the value of their resources and services, especially as patrons are increasingly turning to other means of information acquisition, such as

online search engines. Barriers to the successful implementation of a customer relationship management system in libraries include lack of education and awareness by library staff, as well as cultural and technological concerns raised with usage of the system itself (Wang, 2007). Libraries also may not be as successful at implementing relationship management strategies due to the perceived difference between the university's mission and the mission of firms or other business entities (Hou, 2017).

Libraries often like to be thought of as providing "all things to all people" (Leligdon, Quinn, and Briggs, 2015, p.252), but prioritizing interactions with patrons is a necessity, especially in an environment of information overload, where 140 characters may even be too much information. Knowing how to build relationships using careful planning is therefore an important initial step to eventually raising relationship quality.

There is very little research on the effect library service usage has on student perception of a higher quality relationship with the university. And related literature on student experiences with academic libraries and the resultant role libraries play in overall satisfaction with the university shows divergent results (Lindauer, 1998; Kuh and Gonyea, 2003). Academic libraries are turning more to the use of social media as an outreach tool, as a means to build relationships and create a community of users. Libraries use various approaches to establish relationships with students through social media. Social media can be approached as a tool for building community, with libraries developing stronger connections to students and the campus community through social media (Young and Rossman, 2015; Garofalo, 2013). Phillips (2011) used social media content analysis to study libraries' attempts to establish rapport with students, concluding that social media platforms are a powerful tool for student engagement. This engagement can result

in the development of relationships with students and the institution (McCorkindale, DiStaso and Sisco, 2013).

Motivating students to participate in social networking communities facilitates engagement not only with library services but also with other members of the community, such as other patrons, library staff and faculty. Marketing membership in the community can act as a motivator for participation in other library services (Singh, 2013). Access to a community potentially grants members access to friends of other members, extending reach and providing increased opportunities for engagement with other information of value (Ellison et al., 2014). Libraries who develop deeper partnerships with communities can increase feedback and engagement, and can “more effectively cultivate online relationships” with their community (Singh, 2011). Participation in communities may counteract negative stereotypes students may have of librarians and the anxiety towards libraries students often exhibit (Pagowsky and Rigby, 2014) which can lead to negative educational outcomes (Watson, 2001). Community partnerships can also lead to a reassessment of the library’s position in the university (Stamatoplos, 2009). Predictably, libraries involved in cultivating communities continue to view social media as an increasingly important part of their overall marketing strategy.

Relationship Quality

Relationship quality, founded on the commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing (Morgan and Hunt, 1994), is said to be the most influential mediator in relationship marketing research (Palmatier et al., 2006). According to the relationship marketing literature (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner and Gremler, 2002; De Wulf, Oderkerken-Schröder and Iacobucci, 2001), relationship quality is commonly said to be composed of three main components: relationship satisfaction, a “customer’s affective or emotional state toward a relationship, typically evaluated

cumulatively over the history of the exchange” (Palmatier et al., 2006, p.138); trust, the “confidence in the exchange partner’s reliability and integrity” (Morgan and Hunt, 1994, p.23); and commitment, “an exchange partner believing that an ongoing relationship is so important to warrant maximum efforts at maintaining it” (Morgan and Hunt, 1994, p.23).

Social media marketing is a natural fit with relationship quality because the most effective social media strategies are those that focus on building trust and on communicating a clear and relevant customer benefit (Barwise and Meehan, 2010). Social media lends itself to building brand relationship quality through networking, conversation and community building (Habibi et al., 2016).

Relationship quality is important to higher education marketers because engaged, satisfied students that value their relationship with the university are more likely to be retained as students and remain in contact as alumni. This satisfaction is a comparison of actual performance with expectations. Students that have their expectations met or exceeded are more satisfied with their relationship with the university than those whose expectations are not met. Along those lines, students will report having a higher quality relationship with their university if they trust the institution and also are committed to its long-term success. Social networking sites are a valuable platform for sharing relevant, valuable, and timely information that can meet or exceed students’ expectations, foster trust, and increase commitment.

Hypotheses

Recent research supports the importance of social media followership by students for a higher perception of relationship quality toward a university (Clark, Fine and Scheuer, 2017). The current study extends this research by looking at the library specifically. Although the primary purpose of this research is to better understand how engagement with the library on

social media is related to a student's perception of relationship quality with the university, a secondary aim of the researchers is to explore how students' interest in library services (engagement) is related to the same measure. Although the hypotheses are not testing causality, they are testing a relationship where one aspect leads to another. For example, hypothesis 1 posits that students who follow the library on social media will improve their relationship quality with the university. Likewise, hypothesis 2 posits that students who are interested in library services are likely to have a higher quality relationship with the university. Based on the theoretical development of social media and engagement in general as well as specific to the university and the library, and relationship quality, the following relationships are hypothesized:

H1: Following the library on social media is positively related to a student's perception of their relationship quality with the university.

H2: Students interested in multiple library services are likely to report the perception of a higher quality relationship with the university.

Methodology

Research Design

Due to the emerging need to make information available via multiple channels in today's technology-savvy world, marketers, higher education marketers included, must utilize the available options to reach students where they are looking for information. Because students are the subject of interest for university departments, it made sense to survey them to better understand their social media usage patterns. The survey design is a common method among marketing researchers known for its ability to gather a large amount of data from a sample of the population at a given time. Online surveys are growing in popularity due to their accessibility

and efficiency. For these reasons, the researchers used an online survey to capture students' opinions about the library's services and social media usage using original survey items. Additionally, relationship quality was captured using an established scale. The appropriate analyses were conducted to make sense of the data.

Sample and Data Collection

The data for this study was collected via an online survey of undergraduate and graduate students of a mid-sized 4-year public university in the Eastern United States. Survey respondents were asked a series of questions about their social media behavioral patterns including which sites they use most, why they use social media, how many hours per day they spend on the sites, specific times of the day when they are most likely to use social media sites, if they follow the library on social media, and which sites they use to do so. Additionally, respondents were asked some relationship quality questions related to the university as a whole, as well as some demographic questions. The 46-question survey is rather lengthy, but the authors wanted to capture as much data as possible. Students were required to gather data as part of a team project, so the length was not an issue with response numbers. The questionnaire is available in Appendix A.

The convenience sample was solicited by students (undergraduate and graduate) enrolled in social media marketing courses. There were 23 students enrolled in the undergraduate course and 17 in the graduate course. The undergraduate students completed a social media marketing plan for the library and were asked to collect fifty completed surveys per team as part of their project. The online survey was distributed via a public link posted on the learning management system site for the course. Graduate students were encouraged to complete the survey and distribute the link to their peers as well. The library also distributed the link to students

requesting survey completion. There is not an accurate estimate of the number of times students were asked to complete the survey since it was distributed via an online public link and utilized the convenience sampling method. However, the final number of surveys received was 236. The authors decided to remove the responses from faculty, staff, non-degree seeking students, and those that did not mark a classification. The purpose for removing these responses was to focus on the undergraduate and graduate degree-seeking student population. The resulting data collection yielded 218 usable surveys. The majority of the sample was in the 18-25 or 22-25 age segments. The sample was comprised of primarily upper-classmen with 31% seniors, 27% juniors, 19% sophomores, 10% freshmen and 6% graduate students. Their majors were primarily business (48%) followed by science (22%), humanities and fine arts (18%), education (7%) and university college (5%). The university's overall student population is primarily of traditional age (i.e. 18-25). Science and business are two of the largest colleges on campus, although science is the largest. The university is comprised of approximately 93% undergraduate students and 7% graduate students, so this sample is fairly representative of the overall student population.

Measures

The items measuring social media behavioral patterns were created for this survey. The questions were designed to capture a snapshot of student social media usage including which sites they use and which they use most. Additionally, the items measured the students' purpose for using social media as well as the number of hours spent on the sites and the times of day most likely to be on social media. Several library-specific questions were asked to determine how often students visit the library and the library's website as well as which social media sites they use to follow the library. Finally, the respondents were asked about which library services that

they would like to know more about. The relationship quality items were adapted from Garbarino and Johnson (1999). This is a composite scale comprised of relationship satisfaction, trust and commitment. It is an established and reliable scale with a Cronbach's alpha of .942. These items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale anchored by strongly agree and strongly disagree.

Analysis and Results

Descriptive analyses were undertaken first to better understand the sample's social media usage. The social media platform used by most students was Facebook, followed closely by Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and Snapchat and then a lesser number of students used the other sites. Although more students reported having a Facebook account than any other site, they actually reported using Instagram the most. Table 1 provides exact numbers of how many respondents use each site and their percentages of the total as well as frequencies of which site the respondents use most and the corresponding percentages of the total.

Table 1 Frequencies and percentages of student usage of social media sites

<i>Site</i>	<i>Number of students using site</i>	<i>Percentage of total (218)</i>	<i>Number of students using site most</i>	<i>Percentage of total (218)</i>
Facebook	192*	88.1	41	18.8
Instagram	184	84.4	79	36.2**
YouTube	166	76.1	7	3.2
Twitter	165	75.7	33	15.1
Snapchat	163	74.8	28	12.8
Pinterest	106	48.6	3	1.4
LinkedIn	69	31.7	4	1.8
YikYak	66	30.3	2	0.9
Tumblr	57	26.1	9	4.1
Google+	51	23.4	6	2.8
Other	3	1.4	2	0.9

Notes: *Site that most students report using.

**Site used most by students.

The majority ($136/218 = 62.4\%$) of the students reported spending between one and three hours per day on social media sites. And, over half of them ($125/218=57.3\%$) reported checking in throughout the day and night. This is good news for the university library since they are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and the survey data is being used as a factor in whether the library should have second and third shift staff engage in live online interactions with the community to increase engagement. For now, the Hootsuite social media dashboard application allows the library to schedule posts throughout the day and night in order to gather data on engagement. These numbers will be a factor in determining future content strategy revisions and community building goals and objectives. In the future, in order to counteract the relatively low engagement with library social media on campus, the library may need to increase engagement opportunities with students.

The vast majority of respondents in this survey do not follow the library on social media sites (187/218=85.8%). However, those that do follow the library tend to follow them primarily on Twitter (22/218=10.1%), followed by Facebook (13/218=6.0%) and Blogspot (2/218=0.9%). Each of these accounts requires a different strategy of engagement and community-building to most effectively reach its audience. As an example, Twitter offers timely, relevant information to students, but can also function as an online community by serving as a means of socialization with library staff. By sharing quality content and participating in online conversations with students, Twitter can help libraries interact with their audience as a means of community building, while growing and maintaining their brand as a trusted member of the educational community. Facebook is about connection, so this is a place where libraries can add lengthier posts and human interest content. Blogspot is similar to Facebook in purpose, but allows even lengthier posts that could be presented as part of a theme or storytelling initiative by the library.

Measuring student engagement is a key factor in determining the success or failure of a university library's social media efforts. Engagement can be measured in a variety of ways, including through each platform's administrative interface, but engagement can also be gauged through the interest survey respondents show in multiple library services. The survey suggests that students showing interest in multiple library services are engaged, and may be likely to welcome information from the library. Whether this marketing should take place on social media platforms or through traditional marketing practices should be explored in future studies. Future studies could also focus on strategies of engaging those who do not follow library social media platforms, while also enhancing the engagement of current followers. Table 2 displays the library services that students are most interested in when it comes to information from the library. They are primarily interested in electronic resources, research guides and efficiency tools such as a

mobile app and a computer availability map. Social media is an efficient way to get this information out to the target audience.

Table 2 Interest in library services

<i>Service</i>	<i>Number of students interested</i>	<i>Percentage of total (218)</i>
Electronic resources	87	39.9
Research guides	81	37.2
Library mobile app	73	33.5
Laptop/equipment checkout	51	23.4
Computer availability maps	50	22.9
Library news	48	22.0
Library events	46	21.1
Book a librarian	34	15.6
InterLibrary loan	27	12.4

To test the empirical relationship proposed in the hypotheses, the data were analyzed using regression analysis with SPSS. The results show that following the library on social media is positively related to the student's perception of a high quality relationship with the university, supporting hypothesis 1 ($p < .05$). Additionally, respondents that show interest in more than one library service report the perception of a high quality relationship with the university, supporting hypothesis 2 ($p < .05$). These findings are supportive of other research that finds social media engagement important for relationship quality between universities and students (Clark et al. 2017). However, the library-specific findings are new to the marketing literature and provide support for the use of social media by the university library to enhance relationship quality. The overall findings indicate that engaged students as evidenced through their social media behaviors

are reporting higher quality relationships with their universities than non-engaged students. Table 3 provides the results of the regression analysis.

Table 3 Hypotheses results

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Unstandardised coefficient B</i>	<i>Unstandardised coefficient std. error</i>	<i>Standardised coefficient beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
H1 Following the library on social media is positively related to a student's perception of their relationship quality with the university.	-1.161	.581	-.137	-2.000	.047
H2 Students interested in multiple library services are likely to report the perception of a higher quality relationship with the university.	3.558	1.043	.228	3.412	.001

Conclusion and Discussion

This study sought to better understand how student engagement with a university library through social media and interest in library services was related to their perception of relationship quality with the university overall. Building high quality relationships with students can lead to a host of beneficial outcomes for a university because those students are highly satisfied with their relationship with the university, trust the university, and feel committed to the university. The results provide support for these hypothesized relationships and, therefore, open an intriguing line of communication for university and departmental (library) marketers everywhere. It is often an indirect line from action to results in marketing, and especially social media marketing, so empirical results such as these give reassurance and guidance to universities

interested in improving their marketing efforts. Specifically, the study finds support for the ideas that higher education marketers should utilize social media channels and multiple channels, at that, to reach today's students since they utilize many such platforms regularly.

Engaged students, as evidenced by following the university and departments such as the library on multiple social media sites and showing an interest in additional services, are more likely to report a high quality relationship with the university. It is in the best interest of the university to encourage students to follow it and its departments on multiple social media sites to build and maintain this type of engagement. The students that do so will be more informed and involved on campus, which leads to further engagement. Engaged students are more likely to be retained and loyal as well as a result of their high relationship quality with the university.

Social media should be considered an important part of a library's overall marketing strategy. Library social media content strategy should focus on the marketing of library services, because interest in library services translates to an increased receptivity to engagement and higher perceptions of relationship quality. The data analysis found support for the fact that students who were likely to perceive a higher quality relationship with the university were also those most likely to show interest in multiple library services. Participation through engagement on social media sites leads to a higher quality relationship with the university as well, so another focus of library marketing should be on building a community of engaged users. Community membership also helps to facilitate further usage of library services, creating a feedback loop leading to a more effective servicing of student needs and expectations through successive refinement of goals and outcomes. Finally, university marketers should be interested in these findings and encourage their departments to engage with students and make information about additional services readily available.

Implications

Library marketing objectives at the time of the survey were to seek input from respondents to determine the usefulness of social media marketing and services information content to the library's overall goals as well as the university's purposes. Survey results enabled library staff to revise and reorganize strategic marketing objectives for library social media to better serve current users and target potential future users. Library marketing staff focused more on creating engaging social media content to instigate a dialogue with students. Cultivating relationships through social media was found to be beneficial for the library due to its speed, ability to reach a large potential audience, and "low transaction costs" (Ellison et al., p. 858). The importance of data gathering was revealed during library planning for future social media marketing campaigns, which was a crucial factor in establishing the habits of the library's users (Reynolds, Smith and D'Silva, 2013). It benefited the library to look more deeply into the data to reveal the details; if the data showed that most students used social media in the evening, the library would schedule engaging content during that time to maximize effectiveness. The library plans to continue to share content across university social media platforms to strengthen the campus marketing network. Social media platforms will be used as engagement tools rather than solely for the purposes of communication and notification. Young and Rossmann's (2015) assertion that libraries should practice community building through social network interactions appears to be an effective way to enhance the student experience and provide value-added service to the student population. Libraries should also utilize social media platforms to let students know which services are available. In general, libraries should feel confident that their social media usage is important for developing high quality relationships with students.

Although Facebook was the platform that the most students reported using, Instagram was the platform where most actual usage occurred. This implies that libraries should be cautioned away from viewing survey results as representative of the student group as a whole (Weingart and Anderson, 2000), as response bias is possible in self-reported survey data. Usage of social media platforms shifts over time. Practitioners should therefore track their students' usage of platforms on a periodic basis, to effectively target content delivery and further contribute to student engagement.

The survey in this study reveals that relatively few students follow library social media platforms. This can be seen as an opportunity to reach incoming freshmen on Twitter and Facebook with targeted advertisements. Targeting effectiveness can be limited based on the various idiosyncrasies of each platform's marketing tool (Chan 2012), but the literature on social media marketing in libraries shows that social media can be an effective marketing tool for libraries when done correctly. Gaining followers is the first step in building a social media community, and future research could help in developing a detailed social media community-building plan for the library. The university library in this study has a robust marketing program, including displays of physical items, digital displays and library-themed campus events. Marketing on social media can increase the library's reach on campus by strengthening relationships between departments through information sharing. The library can use social media to reach to students outside of the library building as well.

Limitations and Future Research

This study was conducted at one mid-sized university in a particular geographic location so it is not representative of all universities everywhere. Also, an online survey with a

convenience sample was used to collect the data, which leads to some limitations. The convenience sample, by nature, is not as representative of the population as a random sample would have been. The survey respondents were primarily undergraduate upper-class business students and this could have biased the results. A survey that represented other majors, classifications and possibly faculty/staff could have had different results. Additionally, a relatively small percentage (15%) of respondents actually follow the library on social media, so the results must be tempered with that information. However, this fact highlights exactly why it is important for library marketers to encourage engagement with students via social media platforms; the outcomes are beneficial to the university and should be pursued. Junco's (2012) findings that social media platform activities may more strongly predict student engagement than time spent on platforms provides a potentially useful avenue for future research. Finally, the library is a center of information sharing and is used by many students at a university. Other departments with different purposes and patrons could have different results.

This study describes an initial survey of the overall university student population to determine the engagement of students with library social media and how that could affect their perception of a quality relationship with the university. Future studies could analyze the results by major, classification, undergraduate vs. graduate, etc. The library needs to do further research in targeting freshmen to determine their perception of the library's social media marketing efforts and its effect on their online engagement with the library. The library also needs to pursue community-building as part of its social media marketing strategy, tracking data throughout the years to gain more insight on student perceptions from day one until graduation. Engagement on university social networks is cyclical by nature, as students enter the university, build networks and then graduate. Attrition is expected, so a university library's social media content strategy

should be revised to reflect the need to seek freshmen community members at the beginning of each school year, and look for ways to serve them throughout their time at the university. Social media marketing should be viewed as one important factor in an overall library marketing plan.

Appendix A: Library Social Media Survey

Social Media Behavioral Patterns

1. Which social media sites do you use? Select all that apply.
 - a. Twitter
 - b. Facebook
 - c. Google+
 - d. Instagram
 - e. Pinterest
 - f. YouTube
 - g. Snapchat
 - h. Tumblr
 - i. Yik Yak
 - j. Other _____

2. Which site do you use most? Choose one option.
 - a. Twitter
 - b. Facebook
 - c. Google+
 - d. Instagram
 - e. Pinterest
 - f. YouTube
 - g. Snapchat
 - h. Tumblr
 - i. Yik Yak
 - j. Other _____

3. Why do you use social media? Select all that apply.
 - a. Professional networking
 - b. Exchange of information with peers
 - c. Marketing or sales
 - d. Gathering market intelligence
 - e. Personal professional development
 - f. News and information
 - g. Promotion of my personal “brand”
 - h. Promotion of my company / organization
 - i. Job seeking
 - j. Research
 - k. Other _____

4. Roughly how many hours per day do you spend on social media sites? Choose one option.
 - a. Less than 1 hour
 - b. 1-2 hours
 - c. 2-3 hours

- d. 3-4 hours
 - e. More than 4 hours
5. When do you usually check in to social media sites? Choose one option.
- a. Morning (until 11am)
 - b. Lunchtime (11-1)
 - c. Afternoon (1-5)
 - d. Evening (6-8)
 - e. Night (after 8pm)
 - f. Throughout the day and night
6. Indicate who you interact with the most on Twitter. Choose one option.
- a. Close friends
 - b. Acquaintances
 - c. Co-workers
 - d. Family
 - e. People living far away
 - f. Potential friends
 - g. I'm not on Twitter.
7. Indicate who you interact with the most on Facebook. Choose one option.
- a. Close friends
 - b. Acquaintances
 - c. Co-workers
 - d. Family
 - e. People living far away
 - f. Potential friends
 - g. Classmates
 - h. Businesses
 - i. I'm not on Facebook.
8. Indicate who you interact with the most on Google+. Choose one option.
- a. Close friends
 - b. Acquaintances
 - c. Co-workers
 - d. Family
 - e. People living far away
 - f. Potential friends
 - g. Classmates
 - h. Businesses
 - i. I'm not on Google+.
9. Indicate who you interact with the most on Instagram. Choose one option.
- a. Close friends
 - b. Acquaintances
 - c. Co-workers

- d. Family
- e. People living far away
- f. Potential friends
- g. Classmates
- h. Businesses
- i. I'm not on Instagram.

10. Indicate who you interact with the most on Pinterest. Choose one option.

- a. Close friends
- b. Acquaintances
- c. Co-workers
- d. Family
- e. People living far away
- f. Potential friends
- g. Classmates
- h. Businesses
- i. I'm not on Pinterest.

11. Indicate who you interact with the most on YouTube. Choose one option.

- a. Close friends
- b. Acquaintances
- c. Co-workers
- d. Family
- e. People living far away
- f. Potential friends
- g. Classmates
- h. Businesses
- i. I'm not on YouTube.

12. Indicate who you interact with the most on Snapchat. Choose one option.

- a. Close friends
- b. Acquaintances
- c. Co-workers
- d. Family
- e. People living far away
- f. Potential friends
- g. Classmates
- h. Businesses
- i. I'm not on Snapchat.

13. Indicate who you interact with the most on Tumblr. Choose one option.

- a. Close friends
- b. Acquaintances
- c. Co-workers
- d. Family
- e. People living far away

- f. Potential friends
- g. Classmates
- h. Businesses
- i. I'm not on Tumblr.

14. Indicate who you interact with the most on Yik Yak. Choose one option.

- a. Close friends
- b. Acquaintances
- c. Co-workers
- d. Family
- e. People living far away
- f. Potential friends
- g. Classmates
- h. Businesses
- i. I'm not on Yik Yak.

15. What is the most essential technology you use? Choose one option.

- a. Desktop computer at home
- b. Desktop computer at library
- c. Laptop computer at home
- d. Laptop computer at library
- e. Smartphone
- f. Tablet
- g. Other _____

16. I follow at least one university social media site. Choose one option.

- a. Yes
- b. No

17. I would follow a university account on social media even if I got nothing in return.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

18. I don't need a reward to follow a university account on social media.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

19. I get valuable information from university social media sites.

- a. Strongly Disagree

- b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
20. I often get university news on social media sites.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
21. I like interacting with other followers on university social media sites.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
22. I have made friends with other followers of the university on social media sites.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
23. I follow university accounts on social media only for the rewards I get.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
24. I feel that I am listened to on university social media sites.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
25. I feel I can make a difference to the university by participating in social media.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree

- c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
26. I often voice complaints about the university on social media.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
27. I often comment on university social media sites.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
28. I often participate in contests on university social media sites.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
29. I have recommended that my friends/family follow the university on social media.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
30. How often do you visit the university library? Choose one option.
- a. Daily
 - b. Several times per week
 - c. Once per week
 - d. Once per month
 - e. Once per semester
 - f. Hardly ever
 - g. Never
31. How often do you visit the university library's website? Choose one option.

- a. Daily
- b. Several times per week
- c. Once per week
- d. Once per month
- e. Once per semester
- f. Hardly ever
- g. Never

32. Which social media sites do you use to follow the university library? Select all that apply.

- a. Twitter
- b. Facebook
- c. Blogspot
- d. I do not follow the university library on social media sites.

33. What library services would you like to know more about? Select all that apply.

- a. Library News
- b. Library Events
- c. Laptop/Equipment Checkout
- d. Book a Librarian
- e. Computer Availability Maps
- f. Library Mobile App
- g. InterLibrary Loan (ILL)
- h. Electronic Resources
- i. Research Guides

Relationship Quality

Relationship Satisfaction

34. I am highly satisfied with my relationship with the university.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

35. Compared to the ideal relationship with a university, I am satisfied with my relationship with this university.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

36. I value the relationship I have with this university.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

37. The quality of the relationship with this university is consistently high.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

Trust

38. This university performs with integrity.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

39. This university is reliable.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

40. This university has my best interests in mind.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

41. I feel a sense of belonging at this university.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

Commitment

42. I care about the long-term success of this university.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

43. I feel strongly motivated to continue my relationship with this university.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

Demographics

44. What is your age? Choose one option.

- a. Younger than 18
- b. 18-22
- c. 22-25
- d. 26-30
- e. 31-35
- f. 36-40
- g. 41-45
- h. 46-50
- i. Older than 50

45. What is your major field of study? Choose one option.

- a. Science
- b. Business
- c. Education
- d. Humanities and fine arts
- e. University college
- f. Other _____

46. What is your classification? Choose one option.

- a. Freshman
- b. Sophomore
- c. Junior
- d. Senior
- e. Graduate Student

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