NO SIGNAL: SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING CHALLENGES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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ABSTRACT

The growing underutilization of library resources and services has prompted colleges and universities to apply marketing strategies like social media to keep libraries relevant and responsive to their stakeholders' needs. This phenomenological study aimed to explore librarians' challenges and strategies in marketing academic libraries in Davao region using social media. Data were gathered through key informant interviews with nine librarians who were purposively selected based on the study's inclusion criteria. Results showed that social media marketing has become a trend among libraries and entails challenges. Five themes emerged: accessibility, no clear social media marketing plan, lack of user engagement, additional tasks, and issues and concerns in library social media. Librarians used common marketing strategies such as orientation and instruction and cited innovative strategies and best practices in promoting their library through social media. Lastly, librarians have gained insights in marketing academic libraries using social media, presented into four themes: enhanced library image, improved library services, gaining new skills, and developing a sense of responsibility. To further strengthen social media use in academic libraries, librarians are urged to formulate and intensify a social media marketing plan as a basis for future library social media marketing activities.

INTRODUCTION

The growing underutilization of library resources and services has prompted colleges and universities to apply marketing strategies like social media to keep libraries relevant and responsive to their stakeholders' needs. In the context of library marketing, social media is seen as a helpful tool for librarians and libraries to optimize their work and services and maintain their relevance. At the same time, patrons can share with potential users about the libraries' services promoted through blogs and social media sites (Amina & Nwanne, 2015). Other libraries are also taking advantage of Web 2.0 applications such as wikis, RSS (Really Simple Syndication), and podcasts (Alkindi& Al-Suqri, 2013). As libraries integrate Web 2.0 applications, librarians also need to evaluate the impact of their library services through social media metrics, user perceptions, the extent of library utilization, and visibility in the institution so that they can determine the library's return of investment in its services (Gonzales-Fernandez-Villavicencio et al., 2013; Lloret Romero, 2011; Sewell, 2013). Ayiah and Kumah (2011), Burclaff and Johnson (2016), Jones and Harvey (2016), and Khan and Bhatti (2012) cited social media for its usefulness as marketing or outreach tools. However, organizations may also face challenges such as daily content management, brand competition, susceptibility to quick feedback or criticisms, and potential distractions apart from opportunities to build brand awareness and customer loyalty (Rana & Kumar, 2016).

Some university libraries have recognized the necessity to adopt different marketing strategies to promote library services to students, especially with the rise of Internet and Web 2.0 technologies. In his comparative study, Scicluna (2015) observed that University of Glasgow and University of Malta had incorporated social media in their marketing and outreach efforts. Yet, those who take charge of library marketing in both institutions, including librarians, were also concerned with balancing communication, marketing, and customer care duties on a full-time basis. On the other hand, Omeluzor, Oyovwe-Tinuoye, and Abayomi (2016) revealed that academic librarians in Southeast Nigeria found social networking tools beneficial and cost-effective for delivering library services. Still, challenges were identified, such as erratic power supply, inadequate skill to manipulate social networking and other ICT tools, technophobia, lack of awareness, and lack of internet connection.

In Southeast Asia, Web 2.0 has significantly changed the way librarians interact with their users, with different applications offered depending on the library's needs (Awang & Abidin, 2013). Libraries use social media mostly to market information sources and services, promote library activities, and research purposes (Islam & Habiba, 2015; Khan & Bhatti, 2012). Although social media use has gained positive responses from library users, libraries are concerned about the possibility of social media misuse (Maharana, 2016).

Also, in Philippine academic libraries, librarians believe that marketing plays a significant role in ensuring that the library's academic community uses it. Furthermore, communication, visibility, and customer orientation are key factors in marketing (David & Sagun, 2012). As a response, social media is seen as a channel for libraries to reach out to their library communities. For instance, University of the Philippines Diliman Library has found the possibility of using Facebook to inform and publicize (Dar Juan, 2014). Yet, in one study, after analyzing library Facebook pages of ten colleges and universities in the Philippines in terms of user interaction, engagement is observed to be low for the majority of libraries (Peñaflor, 2018).

Still, the application of social media continues its trend in academic libraries in the local scene. Some academic libraries in Davao region use social media to promote the libraries' activities, post important announcements, and provide a venue for users' queries. But the question lies with how social media marketing has helped them attract library users to avail of the library services, which will eventually reflect through users' feedback and library utilization statistics. This research sought to uncover findings that could open other ideas and opportunities for other academic institutions in the region to promote their libraries to current and prospective users.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Marketing involves identifying users' needs and developing strategies and services to reach out to them to fulfil the library's organizational objectives rather than earn a financial profit (Edewor, Okite-Amughoro, Osuchukwu, &Egreajena, 2016). Marketing has become an integral function among libraries amid the challenges of a limited budget, increased user base, information explosion, rising costs of information materials, and complexity in user information requirements (Edewor, Okite-Amughoro, Osuchukwu, &Egreajena, 2016; Igbokwe, Ezeji, &Obidike, 2010). MacDonald and vanDuinkerken (2015) observed that libraries are no longer seen as the heart of the university or the primary go-to place for student and faculty research needs. With the emergence of technology, people have experienced a shift in the way of finding, accessing, and using new forms of information such as visiting Web browsers instead of libraries, which in turn, can affect changes in core library missions and services (Okon, Ime, &Etim, 2015). Gupta and Savard (2010) cited image and visibility problems among libraries and archives for a long time. In effect, applying marketing principles is seen as a remedy to the underutilization of resources and services (Aderibigbe & Farouk, 2017). For instance, libraries begin to establish their online presence by creating library websites and integrating them into their educational institutions (Becher,

2015; Igbokwe, Ezeji, &Obidike, 2010). However, the extent to which resources and services satisfy users' needs is determined by how they know such resources and services.

Also, web 2.0 refers to web-based applications which include wikis, blogs, social networking, social bookmarking, video sharing, and other applications that allow participatory networking, where librarians and users can make dialogue, collaborate and share information in a user-centered way (Awang&Abidin, 2013; Wood, 2011; Canty, 2010). Web 2.0 applications, particularly social media, are used complementarily to promote library services and to engage with information users while promoting library services at the same time (Ayiah & Kumah, 2011; Burclaff & Johnson, 2016; Chua & Goh, 2010; Jones & Harvey, 2016; Khan & Bhatti, 2012).One of the most widely used social media tools cited is Facebook (Mustafa et al., 2016; Phillips, 2015; Graham, Faix, & Hartman, 2009). Wan (2011) viewed Facebook as a great potential for library marketing and outreach because it is free and easy to maintain. Libraries use Facebook mainly for marketing the library, information services, and information resources (Alkindi & Al-Suqri, 2013; Islam & Habiba, 2015). Among Asia-Pacific university libraries, 39% or the majority use Facebook for promotional purposes, where libraries share information with their users through Facebook posts (Tan et al., 2012). Although Facebook marketing has been encouraged for its cost-effectiveness, its success as a marketing tool would depend on understanding users' behavior, aside from the number of user connections with the library marketing methods (Palma, 2016; Chan, 2012). Jacobson (2011) added that librarians also have to actualize what they are posting on the library's Facebook pages.

Furthermore, the concept of Library 2.0 is strongly associated with Web and social media development. Kronqvist-Berg (2014) cited social media's relevance in the public library context through an integrated analysis that looked into the key elements of social media and public library context. Her study identified seven information activities on social media: reading, seeking, creating, communicating, informing, mediating, and contributing. Although this is a continually developing feature, her study reported a high level of social media services usage among library professionals and users and significant interest in Library 2.0 services.In their literature review, Magoi, Aspura, and Abrizah (2017) cited the benefits of using social media in libraries: promoting library services, improving professional knowledge, connecting with current and potential users, and media sharing and collaborating. Drawbacks were also noted, such as lack of awareness, lack of institutional control, lack of adequate technical infrastructures, lack of ICT skills and time, and privacy issues. Thus, Vassilakaki and Garoufallou (2014) posited that libraries should also develop guidelines for librarians and library users in accessing the information on social networking sites, with the impact observed on how discussions were conducted in an online environment, online privacy, and information overload.

Adding on, social networking sites are one of the communication technologies adapted among the academic community. It offers libraries opportunities to reach out to their clients since this platform has affected all organizations' operations and service delivery. Because of this trend, African university libraries have adapted the idea of having a social networking site linked to a university library's web page to provide an opportunity for a live discussion with a professional on issues on the use of the library while allowing the libraries to advertise their programs and activities (Ayiah & Kumah, 2011). In another instance, Ntaka (2017) concluded that students from Greek universities appreciate their library's Facebook page as an informational tool because it had helped create awareness of important educational programs. Similarly, Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, and Witty (2010) found out that students are more open to using social networking sites than the faculty. Their survey showed that students seem much more open to the idea of using social networking sites such as Facebook in the academic setting. In another study, Shafawi and Hassan (2018) explored social media's implication to library usage, emphasizing user engagement in Malaysia's selected public and academic libraries. The study revealed that online engagement had a positive and statistically significant effect on actual library use. Results showed that most of the respondents sometimes visit the physical library, use the physical library facilities and

services, and participate in the library's event after engaging with the library. In contrast, 21.6% of them less frequently use online services after getting information through social media sites.

On the other hand, responses from the study of Jones and Harvey (2016) indicate that students can value the library service since they can find library services through the library's social media. But they do not see social media as an appropriate venue to engage with the library because of the traditional view that a library is a place of study and books and social media are associated with friends and play. Still, social networking was considered an effective method of student outreach in academic libraries, especially because college students are the most active users of social networking sites. However, there is also a need to watch for privacy issues (Dickson & Holley, 2010).

Generally, marketing has been an essential activity for libraries to make the library known to users, maximize utilization of the library's resources, educate users on the library services, and eventually gain user satisfaction. With the advancement of technology, Web 2.0 technologies, particularly social media, has become a well-accepted marketing strategy in the library environment because of its ease of use, as a venue for communication with users, and a way to improve customer service (Jain, 2014; Canty, 2012). Several studies have shown how social media has been integrated into library marketing efforts and how library users have become receptive to this trend. There may be various concerns arising in adopting the trend in terms of information access, privacy issues, and maintenance problems. Research opportunities are still open, especially in determining the success of applying such innovations for library marketing.

THEORETICAL LENS
The study is viewed through the Social Media Engagement Theory espoused by Di Gangi and Wasko (2016). The theory states that user experiences from social interactions among users and the social media platform's technical factors can influence user engagement and subsequent usage behavior, including perceptions of social acquaintances' critical mass. Thus, this theory's central premise is that higher user engagement leads to more significant social media platform usage. When social media activity is present, libraries can promote their products and services, and at the same time, provide an avenue for clientele to engage and participate in the development of library products (Khan & Bhatti, 2012). Contextually, this theory can help this study look into the library users' social media interaction and librarians' encounters when managing the library's social media page.

The Librarians' Use of Social Media for Promoting Library and Information Resources and Services (LUSP) model of Akporhonor and Olise (2015) also supports the study. This model illustrates the interaction between librarians' use of social media applications and the promotion of library and information resources and services. The authors posited that librarians using social media for professional purposes might likely promote library services or library resources since they let the users know what they are doing and what resources and services they offer to their users. This theory can help the researcher understand librarians' interaction in social media and how library users respond to it. It will also help explore how librarians use social media to promote libraries and services among academic institutions in Davao Region.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
This phenomenological study aims to determine academic librarians' experiences in Davao Region in using social media as a library marketing tool.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
This phenomenological study would like to discover new ideas and knowledge on academic librarians' experiences in Davao region in using social media as a library marketing tool. Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What were the challenges of librarians in marketing academic libraries using social media?
2. What were the strategies of librarians in using social media in marketing academic libraries?
3. What were the insights of librarians in using social media in marketing academic libraries?

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative design using the phenomenological-descriptive approach. According to Creswell (2013), phenomenological research involves understanding the participants' lived experiences regarding the phenomenon studied. There were at least two librarians from each library chosen as key informants and utilized the purposive sampling technique that enabled the researcher to select people or sites that can help describe a case that illustrates the studied situation (Creswell, 2013). The participants were nine librarians from five selected higher Education Institutions in Davao Region, managing their library social media accounts from June 2018 to present, containing library announcements, promotional activities, or other useful information for study and research that were interviewed using validated interview guide. The data were analysed, guided by the qualitative study framework discussed by Creswell (2013) that consist of developing codes, formulating themes out of the codes, and generalizing the phenomenon based on the themes and the related literature. We used a matrix based on the example of Anderson and Spencer (2002) in arranging the themes that served as a guide to understand the case, wherein significant statements were selected from key informant interviews and grouped according to the similarity of meanings. A detailed description of the situation was provided, followed by grouping the data into categories and themes, and developing naturalistic generalizations of what was learned about the study.

Furthermore, we observed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to ensure the qualitative study's trustworthiness (Morse et al., 2002), to address the research's validity to check if the findings are accurate from the researcher's standpoint, the participant, or the readers (Creswell, 2014).

Adding on, qualitative researchers depend upon access to data, which may involve people cooperating in various ways (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). Thus, we considered the ethical implications of any decisions we made, along with various constraints surrounding the research undertaking (Punch &Oancea, 2014). In conducting the key informant interviews, we ensured that the key informants voluntarily participated in the interview and assured that their identities would be kept confidential through an informed consent and codes were used to conceal the identity of the research participants. We observed the provisions of the Republic Act 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Official Gazette, 2012), which emphasizes that personal data gathered must be for a declared, specified, and legitimate purpose. Thus, only the information collected based on the interview protocol and research guide questions were provided in presenting the study results. The presentation of the results would reflect only the significant responses based on the interview questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results

The study results are presented in three (3) parts: the challenges of librarians in marketing academic librarians using social media and its emerging themes; s*trategies of librarians in using social media in marketing academic libraries and insights of librarians in using social media in marketing academic libraries*

Challenges of Librarians in Marketing Academic Libraries Using Social Media

When asked about the challenges participants encountered in using social media in library marketing, five themes emerged: accessibility, no clear social media marketing plan, lack of user engagement, additional tasks, and issues and concerns in library social media.

Accessibility. The academic libraries involved in this study have already existing social media pages for how many years. Aside from being a medium for library marketing activities, librarians have seen social media as a means of communication in the workplace, especially to those assigned in separate sections.However, the study participants still noted challenges that hindered their access to social media for their marketing activities. Some of them are the following: social media is blocked in the institution, limited access for library staff, and slow internet connection. One typical instance among librarians is that social media sites are blocked in the whole campus. One participant commented: *"Angmgaempleyado, dilipwede mag FB during office hours, naa mi mandsate ana. How can we proceedsaamoangmgakuannga, nagiging part kasiang FB saamoang daily activities. Even sa group chat sa Messenger, nagiging workplace namoang Messenger."* (KI 8, Q1.2) (We have a mandate wherein employees cannot access Facebook during office hours. How can we proceed with our daily activities since Facebook and even group chats on Messenger have become part of our workplace?)

Furthermore, for libraries to have active social media sites, a stable internet connection is essential to communicate to library users and social media followers effectively. When librarians encounter problems in internet connection, the information that they have will become outdated. Another participant cited the effect after they have experienced a delay in announcing an event on social media because of problems in internet connection: *"Walana-disseminate ang info, wala pod syana-kuandidtomismosa account, sa page…walana-announce, anasya. So mag-appear didto, human naangkuan (event), maonanaangkuan, ah nagconductdiaysila, daghandiaynangapil, maodiayniang topic."* (KI 6, Q1.2) (The information was not disseminated because it was not announced on our page. So we were just able to post when the event is done.)

No clear social media marketing plan. The librarians recognize the need for a social media marketing plan, in which they could craft strategies to make the library social media page known to patrons. They may have planned on the activities to be done, but the problem is how these will be implemented. One participant admitted: *"Walapa pod sya proper program gani or, what do you call this…plan gani ma'am nanaay daily task unsay i-post karon, asakuhaon."* (KI 1, Q1.1) (We have no proper program yet, with assigned daily task on what to post and where to get them.)

Before implementing promotional activities, there was also a need to organize first the library's operations to effectively utilize the library and have the means to show what the library has to offer. One participant shared: *"Pagsulodnakodiria, kaning library, unorganized pa…walapa'y available records, wala pa nina-arrange. So pag-abotnako, murag nag-anokoba kung unsaonnakosyapag market ang library para mas daghan, modakoang utilization, kaypagsulodnakodiri, walaykopyasa utilization, walay record ang library about sa existing number of printed books so muragakotanansugod."* (KI 4, Q1.1) (When I came here, the library was still unorganized. There were no available records. I was also concerned about increasing the utilization since the library had no available record on utilization and existing printed books.)

Lack of user engagement. Another concern raised was how to gather followers in their library social media page, especially when the page was just starting. During library orientation, librarians encourage the students and faculty to "like" and follow the library social media pages. In this way, users are provided with a platform to get library updates and post their queries concerning library services. Even if librarians promoted the library page in library orientation sessions, it still gained few followers, so librarians continued to find ways to reach out to a wider audience. As one participant shared: *"Yung first nana-encounter naminna problem is on how to gather yungmga likers or followers ng page.Paanobanamin ma-market yung library kung walakamingmga followers sa page. So naghanap kami ng techniques, like for example during National Book Week. Actually, proposal yun, hindiyunnaminnagawa."* (KI 2, Q1.2) (The first problem we encountered was gathering likes or followers

and how we will market our library when we don't have followers. So, we thought of techniques like, for example, during National Book Week, but it was not realized.)

Additional tasks.Managing the library's social media page has become an added responsibility for librarians. Aside from their regular duties, librarians in-charge of the library social media accounts have some other tasks to be done.For instance, one librarian wasalso busy in pursuinggraduate studies apart from library tasks. As one participant shared: *"Aside ana, saiyaha man pod study, kaynaga-masteralna man pod sya, busy pod kaayoiyahangmga line-up. Sa ako pod, busy pod kaayokokay, naa man pod kogina-handle namga staff, mga intern saakoa man pod, so daghansyaugano, maong di na ma-maintain."* (KI 6, Q1.1) (Aside from that [social media page], she is also busy with her studies, she is taking up her master's degree. On my part, I am also busy handling staff and interns, that's why we cannot maintain the social media page). Thus, keeping the social media page up-to-date was sometimes left behind due to librarians' hectic workload.

To help lessen librarians' workload, some institutions would designate another staff to take charge of managing the library's social media page. The social media in-charge assigned is usually adept with computers and technology. However, there were instances where the in-charge has other functions apart from maintaining the library social media page. One participant added: *"Dapatnaagyud mag-facilitate na purely kayamoa man gud internet in-charge, daghan man gudsyag "slash," multitasking man gudsya...dililanggyudsyaingonna purely, or, for library kaygina-ano man pod syasa admin, maghimo'g tarpaulin, ingonani, so dilikaayosya ma-maintain."* (KI 6, Q1.1) (Our internet in-charge is multitasking; aside from the library, the admin would assign him to make tarpaulin and others, so the social media page is not that maintained.)

Issues and concerns on library social media. Librarians may have considered social media as an effective medium to promote their library and communicate with their patrons, but they still have issues and concerns surrounding its use.There were instances where students and school administrators expressed adverse feedback on social media use in libraries, with regard especially to library users' privacy.

Since the library social media page has become a venue to give feedback concerning library services, students would also channel their feedbacks on other departments through the library social media account. As one informant stated: *"Sa amoamubalikangmgakalagotsaestudyantegudsaubang department, saamoa i-blame...usahaydidtoginapostsa comments sakanang among post"* (KI 4, Q1.3) (Students' complaints to other departments are sometimes blamed to us by posting their comments on our post).Moreover, since everything posted on the social media page is visible to the public, data privacy has become a concern for the library and the institution. For instance, school administrators questioned the posting of top borrowers on social media because it might breach data privacy. One informant shared: *"Nagabutang man koug name...name saestudyante, tapos course, year, ug number of books nanahiram. Angpangutanalangsa QMO na...actually, gitan-aw nilaangakong post about anakay basin daw labagsa Data Privacy Act, perodili man syalabagkayangakoang purpose lang man is to encourage students pod na, ay, manghiramkokaysilanaay award, anagud."* (KI 4, Q1.3) (I have been posting names of students, their course and year, and the number of books they borrowed, but I was warned that it might violate the Data Privacy Act. I said that my purpose for posting is to encourage other students to borrow because they might get an award).

Strategies of Librarians in Using Social Media in Marketing Academic Libraries
Participants were asked about the strategies that they used in marketing their library through social media. They have traditional and innovative approaches and best practices to reach out to library patrons on social media.

Common marketing strategies. The most common strategy used by librarians in promoting their library social media page is through library orientation for freshmen students. Librarians also included the social media page link in the library user's guide, brochures, and bulletin boards. These strategies have made the students informed of the library services and updates posted on social media. It also provided a platform for students to publish their inquiries regarding library services. Aside from library orientation, the social media page is spread through word of mouth. Librarians also take library periods to inform the classes about social media pages and gather more followers. As one participant said: *"Ginapromotenamosya, during sa orientation. Actually, naayubanna, usahaykaynaaymga library period angmga teacher, especially samga senior high, so gina-ingnan pod nakoang teacher kasimaggamit man yansilasaamin, maggamitsilasa computer or kung naasila activity period, unyakuhaonangkatungilahanggihatagna assignment, dapatnaay sign sa librarian. Usahay man gud, usa pod nasyasa--dili pod sya as in gihadlok…anolang, kanang, "sasunod ha, before komupirma, dapatnaka-like namosa Facebook page," mgaingana* (KI 4, Q2.2)." (We promote our library page during orientation. Actually, when senior high school teachers conduct library periods, we also inform the teachers since the class will be using our facilities, our computers, during their activity period. Their assignments should bear the signature of the librarian. I don't mean forcing them, but it's just my way of telling the students to like our Facebook page before I sign.)

Innovative strategies. Librarians employed unique techniques to encourage students to follow the library's social media pages. In one institution, students would show screenshots or proof that they have "liked" the library Facebook page as part of clearance requirements. Making the library social media accounts visible on the library website can also help reach a wider audience. Another innovative strategy done by librarians was conducting contests and activities during National Book Week, which involve library patrons' online participation. The "Book Face" or "My Book Selfie" contest has become a highlight among their library activities. It is a contest where participants use a book cover to take a creative selfie photo. Students submit their pictures through the library's Facebook page and tag their friends to "like" their entries. Such activities were an attractive way of promoting the library page to patrons while page visitors get amused with the posts. According to one informant: *"So kana sya, mga unique ngakuannilanganagiging phenomenon sya last Book Month celebration kaydaghankaayong nag join, peroang staff gudang nag-una-unaug post, hangtodangmga students ning-sunodunya mas creative ang students pod kaynalupigannilaang post sa staff."* (KI 8, Q2.2) (This activity is unique because it becomes a phenomenon every Book Week since more students join with their more creative entries.)

Best practices. Librarians have used other strategies that may also be helpful for library patrons. Interesting articles, video presentations, and infographics are posted on the library page so that users will become aware of the existing library services while providing information relevant to their research needs. Uploading pictures of library activities on the Facebook page for documentation purposes lets the patrons become more aware of the library's presence in the school community, thus, helping sustain their library marketing efforts. Even school-related announcements such as offering of new programs can also be a way for librarians to promote their newly acquired books. In one institution, the library has provided a feature in its social media page called "Libstagram," where users can post pictures and share their library experiences (KI 9, Q2.2). A more time-saving strategy cited is by reposting updates from other reliable sites. As oneinformant shared: *"So parehasanangEbscohost, angEbscohostkaymo-share man nasila'g tips on how to do fast research…so i-share nimona, at least naa pod—walaka nag-effort sa content, pero it's a relevant content, good content ngapwedemakaabotsaimuhang user"* (KI 7, Q2.2) (For example, Ebscohost shares tips on how to do fast research. It's a relevant and useful content which you can readily share to your users). These strategies boosted the library page and showed the followers some best features that the library can offer.

Insights of Librarians in Using Social Media in Marketing Academic Libraries

Lastly, librarians were asked what they have learned from using social media in their library marketing activities. They shared the following insights which can help other librarians who are planning to promote their libraries through social media.

Enhanced library image. Librarians have seen the need to be more responsive to the changing needs of library users. Since most of their library users are becoming active in social media, mere word of mouth cannot reach a wider audience. Through social media, page visitors can have a glimpse of the library's features, facilities, and resources. Patrons can also share their library experiences, which could give a positive impression to other library users. As one participant puts it: *"Using social media as a marketing tool will be good for the library. It has a big impact on the library's image as you gain more followers. It can also enable you to reach out more to your library users. I learned this from the seminars that I have attended, especially that our speakers encourage more social media use. Having more followers in your library social media account can make a great impact for your library since you can reach out more to your users"* (KI 1, Q3.1).

Improved library services. Through social media, students are informed that there are other facilities that the library has to offer. It contributed to having maximized library utilization after featuring some library services on social media. The library's social media page has also become a cost-effective means of disseminating information and improving its current awareness service. Eventually, the library has saved effort and resources in sending communications to library users. As one informant shared: *"Actually, it came out during the librarians' meetings that we need to improve the current awareness system that we are using in the library. Kasi di ba, before, it's really more on traditional, it's more on paper, and then we want to go paperless."* (KI 7, Q1.1)

Gained more skills. Adopting social media in library activities has also allowed librarians to gain other skills as they utilize library marketing technologies. Through social media, librarians have developed themselves in other aspects such as communication skills, critical thinking skills, marketing skills, and awareness of current events. Aside from being useful in their work as administrators of the library social media site, librarians' skills have helped them engage with users online. Although librarians have developed themselves in other aspects, they admitted that they still have more to learn in social media technologies. They realized the importance of undergoing seminars and further training to help them improve their library marketing activities. One participant suggested: *"It's good to have proper training, although equipped na sila to use a Facebook account or mga personal na account. So it's still different."* (KI 7, Q3.3) (It's good to have proper training, although they are already equipped to use Facebook. It's still different from using a personal Facebook account.)

Developed a sense of responsibility. Librarians realized that even simple online posts could create an impression of people serving the library and the services that the library offers. Accuracy of information is essential as part of the social media's role to inform library patrons. Librarians should also be honest in promoting on social media the existing services that the library offers. Otherwise, this may lead to misinformation on the part of the users. On the other side, even if the library is active in social media, this also calls for librarians to be mindful of their duties. The library's social media page is a reflection of what kind of library an institution has. Thus, librarians strive to cultivate a sense of responsibility to maintain a positive image from promoting their library through social media. In summary, one informant said: *"Social media can make or can break your office. Dependesya how you make it, and be ready lang if someone breaks it"* (KI 8, Q3.1). (Social media can make or break your office. It will depend on how you make it. You have to be on guard on who's going to break it.)

DISCUSSION

Results showed that social media marketing has become a trend among libraries and entails challenges. One of the study participants' challenges was the blocking of social media sites in their

schools. Some higher education institutions in Cyprus implemented a ban on Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube in fear of their students watching immoral videos in school (Tuncay, 2018). For Amarakoon and Seneviratne (2014), limited access to social media happens because there is no agreement between library departments. Some are willing to use social networking tools, while others are hesitant. One informant's case relates to this, wherein their institution mandates that all its employees are not allowed to access Facebook during office hours. Still, the library continues its social media activities as long as they are done for official communication purposes.

Technical problems can have an impact on social media marketing activities. Participating librarians shared that they have experienced a delay in posting information because of slow internet connection. The internet's slow speed is also considered one of the top problems noted in some university libraries in the Asian context (Islam & Habiba, 2015; Khan & Bhatti, 2012). While in Nigeria, some authors cited erratic power supply, lack of ICT facilities, and lack of awareness in utilizing online technologies as challenges among academic libraries (Omeluzor, Oyovwe-Tinuoye, and Abayomi, 2016; Amina&Nwanne, 2015). Such challenges could negatively affect library service delivery. As shared by some librarians, the effect could be either the followers were informed late or the information posted becomes obsolete.

Promoting the library's social media page was also a challenge for the participating librarians. They have been promoting their social media page during library orientation, but it still gained few followers. Getting students engaged with the library through social media was also one of the difficulties reported by Jones and Harvey (2016) in their findings. The authors found out that there is a divide between what librarians think about students' social media use and what students want from the library's social media presence. Also, social media is being associated with friends and play while library with work. However, according to Ramsey and Vecchione (2014), the library can establish itself as a campus community information center by posting about other campus departments' resources and events to engage more with the school community.

Garoufallou, Zafeiriou, Siatri, and Balapanidou (2013) revealed that despite a high unemployment rate in library and information science undergraduates, academic librarians considered the lack of well-informed professional staff as one factor contributing to the low penetration of marketing techniques in Greek academic libraries. In the local context, the librarians said that managing the library's social media page is an added responsibility for them aside from their regular tasks. Eventually, keeping the social media page up-to-date was left behind due to the hectic workload of librarians. In effect,Dar Juan (2014) cited improper monitoring due to multitasking staff and cases of inaccurate posts with either factual or grammatical errors.

For Tella and Akinboro (2015), although librarians are already embracing Web 2.0 technologies in the library setting, there is a significant level of confusion, skepticism, resistance, and fear surrounding technology use among African libraries. Particular challenges were noted in terms of social media use in libraries, such as organization support, user orientation, user participation, training, privacy issues, skilled labor, technical and institutional barriers, which were also experienced by the participants. From the various challenges cited in social media marketing, defining specific policies was suggested to clarify libraries' responsibilities in social media outreach activities (Abdullah, Chu, Rajagopal, Tung, &Kwong-Man, 2015).

As one participant shared, privacy issues were even questioned towards libraries using social media. Massi (2017) noted that some social media platforms that are the most popular could potentially open up the user to potential hacks or privacy breach. Aside from that, negative postings from users could fuel distressful situations at times, which have made libraries more cautious in using social media technologies since data privacy would not only concern the library's image, but even the academic

institution itself (Dar Juan, 2014; Magoi, Aspura, & Abrizah, 2017). Nevertheless, social media can still be an effective method of reaching out to academic library users, as long as student privacy is considered and equal coverage is provided in all subject areas (Dickson & Holley, 2010).

Also, the study found out that Davao region librarians employed traditional and innovative strategies, and cited some of their best practices to reach out to library patrons in social media. The most common way to inform the users on the library social media page is through library orientation. This promotion technique and classroom instruction are considered most effective concerning event promotion techniques since it emphasizes the importance and effectiveness of individual and group interactions (Yi, 2016). As librarians embrace innovation, social media has become a tool for library orientation in academic libraries due to its wider coverage, ease of use, cost-effectiveness, and interactive feature (Benson & Nkechi, 2019). Although participating librarians still conduct library orientation through actual class sessions, they still use it as an opportunity to inform and encourage students to post their inquiries regarding library services through social media. With this, Tella and Akinboro (2015) cited Facebook, for instance, as a platform for library users to ask questions on library use. Aside from library orientation, the librarians also included the social media pages' links in the library user's guide, brochures, and bulletin boards.

Innovative strategies include organizing National Book Week activities such as "Book Face" and "My Book Selfie," where students invite others to like their entries and follow the library social media page in the process. Based on Jones's (2017) suggestion, contests on social media with user-generated content form submissions can increase online engagement, grow email lists, and reach more people. Aside from attracting more followers, these also help provide information relevant to library patrons' research needs. Posting interesting articles, video presentations, and infographics on library social media were considered best practices among participating librarians. Social media followers can also contribute blog posts, website pages, images, social media posts, and testimonials to get more mileage. Such activities connect to Jain's (2013) cited guidelines for successful social media marketing in libraries, including deciding what content to post, promoting events, engaging library patrons with contests, and strategizing to market social media presence by establishing linkages among friends and other people.

Another best practice shared by one of the key informants is providing patrons a platform to post pictures of their library experiences on the social media page. These activities corroborate with Shafawi and Hassan's (2018) findings, which implied a better increase in user engagement if more quality content is posted on social media channels since information quality was a significant predictor of user engagement on social media channels. Joo, Choi, and Baek (2018) added that posts on community news and those with attached images and emotionally inspiring messages tend to receive more user engagement.

Furthermore, the librarians' insights in marketing academic libraries using social media reported an enhanced library image, improved library services, and developed professional competencies. Exploring social media possibilities to interact and connect with their patrons is still relatively new for information professionals. Through social media, page visitors can take a glance at the library's features, facilities, and resources. Thus, librarians have perceived that using social media as a marketing tool can help enhance library image. Such perspective supports the responses from Roos's (2013) study wherein respondents defined library marketing as an activity that involves image building and advertising or selling of library services.Librarians also perceived that social media had become a cost-effective means of disseminating information to library patrons, thus improving current awareness services. For instance, Mazzocchi (2014), Mustafa et al. (2016), and Tan et al. (2012) cited Facebook as a communication tool for disseminating information on library services and events, and asan effective medium for answering user inquiries**.**

As librarians utilize social media technologies in promoting academic libraries, they also develop specific skills in the process, such as communication, marketing, and current awareness. This insight supports the idea of Murphy and Moulaison (2009), wherein librarians need a new branch of skills required in utilizing social networking sites to provide quality services and maintain their role as information experts in a Web 2.0 world. Similarly, Shahbazi and Hedayati (2016) noted that communication skills are the most in-demand digital librarian competencies according to the analysis of newly emerging IT-based LIS jobs in 2013. Furthermore, they identified competencies such as searching methods, information-seeking consultation, knowledge of Web 2.0 services, and knowledge of basic computer concepts necessary for librarians' jobs that deal with information technology. Thus, social media use also calls for librarians to explore more opportunities to develop additional social media competencies. This insight supports Magoi, Aspura, and Abrizah (2017), citing professional knowledge improvement as one of the benefits of using social media in libraries.

Lastly, librarians have gained a sense of responsibility as administrators of their library social media accounts while applying their communication skills at the same time. They have also become conscious in terms of grammar and accuracy of information in their social media posts to avoid misinformation on the users' part. Similarly, Amina and Nwanne (2015) stressed mindfulness in posting on social media because if online content is shared wrongly, it might be difficult to take it offline again and remain there for everybody to see.

Limitations of the Study

The study explored how social media is used as a marketing tool among academic libraries in Davao Region. In the entire region, Davao City was chosen as the research locale because of the high concentration of colleges and universities. Most of these institutions have library social media accounts for promoting library services and updating on library activities. The selection of academic libraries in Davao Region having active social media accounts was based on the most number of Facebook likes, other social media accounts, and online posts' recency.

Inasmuch as we would want to gather data from all libraries with existing social media accounts, we have encountered challenges during the conduct of this study. Some institutions that have met the inclusion criteria are stringent in obtaining information from the prospective participants, such as submitting papers to their Research Ethics Committee for further evaluation. Moreover, the data gathered were only limited to librarians' experiences regarding their challenges, strategies, and insights in using social media in marketing their library. We were not able to include the extent of user engagement in the study's scope since I was not able to gather feedback from actual library users on the library's social media marketing activities. This may be suggested for future researchers to add support to the findings of this research undertaking.

Implications of the Study

Based on this study's findings, librarians still support the use of social media as a marketing tool for academic libraries. Since this has been an emerging trend among academic libraries in the region, this study has provided insights that may be shared as learning experiences for other librarians and information professionals who would like to follow this trend. Thus, recommendations were also made to encourage maximized usage of this tool among academic institutions.

Through this study, administrators may see social media as an innovative strategy in promoting their academic institution alongside marketing their library. Library administrators may ask the school administrators to strengthen social media use in library marketing further while promoting their institution in the process. They can also formulate policies and define specific tasks to effectively utilize this tool to promote both the library and the institution. Librarians are urged to develop a social media marketing plan to guide what should be posted on their library social media accounts and serve as a basis for future

library social media marketing activities. In turn, to gain more user engagement, those who take charge of managing the library social media page should continually update their followers through sharing more informative content, aside from regular posting of library announcements. With the growing number of libraries in the region using social media, librarians can conduct more seminars and training to promote awareness of social media's benefits in boosting the library services and be equipped with the skills needed to sustain the social media marketing activities.

This study can also serve as a bridge for further research, especially on the implication of using social media in libraries to library users. Since the study is only limited to the librarians' experiences in using social media as a library marketing tool, future researchers may conduct another research on social media marketing's implication to the extent of library utilization in academic libraries. They can also explore the perspectives of library patrons regarding the use of social media in libraries.

Conclusions

This study provided a different view of social media usage in academic libraries. Despite the challenges in social media access, librarians in Davao region are open to this emerging trend. They have seen this as an opportunity to engage with their library patrons to boost library services utilization. On the other hand, librarians should also be innovative and creative in updating their social media page to entice faculty and students to access the library's rich resources and efficient services.

Ultimately, librarians strive to cultivate a sense of responsibility because, for them, the library's social media page is a reflection of what kind of library a higher education institution has. To maintain the positive image that they have gained from promoting their library through social media, librarians have become cautious of what they post and observe accuracy and honesty in providing information online.

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