PERCEPTION OF A PROFESSION: LIBRARIANS AND STEREOTYPING IN SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

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Abstract
Today librarians are keeping up on how the users will approach them without even thinking their first impressions about them. The wrong stereotyping of librarians is more probable to have a negative effect in the enticement of librarianship as a profession to the new generation. There is a lot of stereotyping about the profession that is circulating the World Wide Web, specifically in the famous social networking sites. Moreover, there is a need to recognize what are the stereotypes the librarian are facing not just in the vicinity of the library itself, but also to the social networking sites where millions of people can get access to.

**Keywords:** librarians, stereotyping, social networking sites, Facebook, Instagram

1. Introduction
A stereotype is a belief about a group of people where they generalized about their norms and beliefs (Kanahara, 2006). The stereotype is also known for a rigid approach to interpreting a certain group (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981). Therefore, if a person perceives himself as a group of people, where he portrays the norms and beliefs of the said group, then that is what you called stereotyping. The librarians and the library profession, continually generalized by the way they interact with the society. The fast updates through social network sites used it for expressing their perception of librarians and its profession. This study examined the various perceptions of the librarians and its profession in social networking sites.

Essentially, social networks represent the collective body of the people we know. Its primary level composed of family, friends and co – workers; typically an individual known in person. Upon extending this primary network, a secondary group of conductors emerges. This level represents the friends. As more layers added, the rich of social linking continues to expand (Matthews, 2007). Among these social networking sites known to almost all people are Facebook, Instagram, MySpace, and Twitter. Most of these social networking sites let netizens have different posts. Since everyone can express their thoughts and feelings, they can share and express freely. It is then through a proactive learning that libraries and librarians will be able to equip themselves with sufficient knowledge for them to prepare for any problem that may arise because of technology.
The librarianship as a profession has a minimal change in sixty years (Wells, 2013). Librarians are portrayed negatively in both movies and social networking sites. A study conducted by Atterbury (2010) that librarians have a negative stereotype and as portrayed by the netizens in social networking site called YouTube and same goes with different films (Shaffer & Casey 2013). The existence of stereotypes of librarians is strong because some school librarians are still practicing and supplying the traditional services of the library (Micle, 2014).

Today librarians are keeping up on how the users will approach them without even thinking their first impressions about them. The wrong stereotyping of librarians is more probable to have a negative effect in the enticement of librarianship as a profession to the new generation. There is a lot of stereotyping about the profession that is circulating the World Wide Web, specifically in the famous social networking sites. Moreover, there is a need to recognize what are the stereotypes the librarian are facing not just in the vicinity of the library itself, but also to the social networking sites where millions of people can get access to.

The purpose of this paper is to scrutinize the possible perceptions of the netizens towards librarians and librarianship profession in social networking sites. As a survey conducted by the American Library Association, the appearance of a librarian is the number one concern of the field (Wallace, 1989). The objectives attained by fulfilling the perception of the netizens about (1) physical appearance, and (2) values and attitude. The commonly used social networking site, which is Facebook and Instagram, has to figure out. Furthermore, the findings of the study will help clarify the breadth of library stereotype at the modern time.

2. Review of Literature

Stereotype threat is the origin of anxiety which influences the coping with faculty, staff, students, and librarians. Students are afraid to approach a librarian who appears busy and or worse carrying a negative experience with other librarians (Katopol 2014).

Many studies conducted about librarians and librarianship’s stereotyping of a profession. Librarians perceived in social media (Atterbury, 2010) as well as in movies (Wells, 2013; Rooke, 2010; Shaffer & Casey, 2013) primarily as old maids (Vassilakakiz & Papaconstantino, 2014). According to Atterbury (2010), it showed that librarians are overly sensitive about the generalize of being an old maid librarian and have negative stereotyping that are portrayed an online video created by a non – librarian in YouTube. One of the videos that a non – librarian made has a portrayal and apparently, a parody. A parody in which inspires viewers to point earnestly out flaws with an ill – natured stereotype. However, it only shows that there is a chance for the librarians to make use of this technique created by the non – librarians to receive awareness and realization from the overall population.

Most librarians portrayed in different films, and it has similar stereotypes about librarians. The stereotypes rely on the viewer’s judgment (Shaffer & Casey, 2013). Though there has been a development in the depiction of librarians in movies, comprehensively there has been minimal changes in sixty years (Wells, 2013). A typical
observation is that more established librarians have been moderate to grasp innovation, and this recognition because of contrasts in the way individuals learn amid the course of a lifetime, instead of enthusiasm for substance (Munde, 2010).

Librarianship has always been a profession employing more women than men. In 2013, Dominique Daniel said that diversity initiatives needed in libraries. This diversity initiative is to make sure that all patrons feel comfortable to approach librarians, especially male librarians. Regardless of the age, gender, and race, the library should have staffs that most patrons feel comfortable to approached. The presence of stereotypes of librarians is still extremely because some school librarians are still practicing and supplying the traditional services of the library. Positive traits are just as used inconsistency with negative ones. Through this, the interactions of the librarians towards the users are slowly expanding because the development of new communication and technologies, thereby assigning the re-invention the library identity (Micle, 2014).

In 2011, Branka Badovinak & Primoz Jusnic considered in their study that librarians are passionate about working. Older librarians also known as the Baby Boomer generation were in a refusal of the concept for a change, discontent to accept the younger generations of librarians. However, these older librarians perceived as having a strong work ethic, being reliable and devoted to their work. However, generation X and generation Y are most likely prolific and take activity in correlation to all the librarians’ generation. The library heads are responsible for avoiding the disagreement between the three generations, promoting reverence and mutual understanding, and to learn from one another (Gail, 2010).

3. Conceptual Framework

The stereotyping of the netizens towards the librarians and the library profession in the social networking sites is the foundation of this study. Its target is to determine on what are the perceptions of the netizens based on the use of hashtags (#) they have provided with together with their posts. The use of hashtags (#) symbol started only in one of the biggest social networking sites today, called Twitter. Hashtag let users use it to categorize or group their posts so that upon searching, it directly links a user to the similar topic/s a netizen is searching (Muntean, Morar & Moldovan, 20102).

The Self-Categorization Theory (STC) is anchored by this study. STC is a theory of the nature of the self that recognizes that perceivers are both individuals and group member. It explains how and when people will define themselves as individual and class entities and its implications, and examines the impact of this variability on self – perception of understanding of mind and behavior (Turner & Reynolds, 2011). The STC theory presented supports this study since it explains the important group behavior and social identity that expected only under selected conditions and motivated more work done specifying the social psychological conditions that lead to a group rather than each attitude and actions. It explains that on what they have perceived a dependable person, be it a librarian, it automatically makes a generalized of their perceptions.

The Social Judgeability Theory is also anchored by this study, developed by Leyens, Yzerbyt, and Schandron (1997) to explain that people depend on guileless
theories when shaping impressions. One rule is that an observer ought not to pass judgment on others on the sole premise of their stereotypes. They might, nonetheless, misattributed a classification based on impressions of the target data and fall prey to the dream of being educated given individuation confirmation is available, and the stereotype is not made. The said theory supports this study because it illustrates that when someone had made a stereotypical judgment when they believed the individuation information present even if no information made a more confident judgment than the first one. It indicates that the illusion of receiving individuation information led someone to believe they possessed the necessary evidence for a lawful decision – making (see Figure 1).

![Conceptual Framework](image-url)
4. Research Design and Method

The study will focus on analyzing and exploring the possible perception of librarians and librarianship profession in social media by the netizens. To achieve the study, the researcher will use data mining, content analysis, and thematic analysis. Data mining is a constant process gathered by discovery. Data mining is useful in an exploratory analysis, a scenario in which they are no predetermined notions about what will emerge as an interesting outcome. It is also the search for new, valuable and nontrivial information from large volumes of data (Kantardzic, 2011). Data mining will help the researcher to analyze the data retrieved from the social networking sites, specifically Facebook and Instagram. It will also tell the relationship of the patterns and dig through the enormous sets the data. In this method, it will predict the frequent generalization of the netizens towards the librarians and its profession. It further answers the questions that cannot be responded to simple query or reporting.

Content analysis is a systematic, applicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 1980; and Weber, 1990). This technique can only be applied to data that are durable. It is a useful technique for allowing us to discover and describe the focus of individual, group, institutional, or social attention (Weber, 1990). Thematic Analysis (TA) is a method for identifying and analyzing patterns of meaning in a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It illustrates which themes are important in the description of the phenomenon under study (Daly et al., 1997).

The study conducted on Social Networking Sites which began in 1978. The specific social networking sites that the researcher will use as the primary sourced of data is Instagram and Facebook. Facebook or initially known as “The Facebook” introduced by Mark Zuckerberg on February 2004. In August 2005 it became Facebook.com. Users can express their thoughts, communicate with others thru online, post pictures and many more (Phillips, 2007). On the other hand, Instagram is a mobile app launched by Mike Krieger and Kevin Systrom in October 2014 and in April 2012. Its main feature is uploading pictures with photo effects (2014). These two networking sites were chosen by the researcher because both are popular social networking sites today. Social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram plays a vital role in disseminating information on the Internet (Dewan & Kumaraguro, 2014). One of the most popular activities in these networks is photo sharing (Memarovic et al., 2013).

The respondents of the study confined only to netizens, specifically netizens using Facebook and Instagram. It made use of the posts of the netizens and now included with their posts the hashtags randomly set by the researcher. According to Merriam – Webster dictionary, a hashtag is a word or phrase that begins with a symbol # or also known as the hash symbol that groups the text. The researcher chooses ten different hashtags in three weeks. The use of hashtags is a way of bringing conversations about public events, people, and topics to the forefront.

The researcher started getting data last September 8, 2015, to October 1, 2015. Through the use of social networking sites, namely Facebook and Instagram, the researcher will have to search the twelve hashtags chosen in the search box of both
social networking sites. Upon entering the hashtags, the researcher will have to
determine and chose wisely the results given by the social network. The researcher has
to identify first if the hashtags came from a non-librarian and will strictly avoid results
that came from a librarian. The probable results on Facebook are pictures and
testimonials on how they see, feel and perceive librarians and the library profession,
along with it is the caption containing the hashtags. While on Instagram, the main result
where pictures which show and describe on how they perceived librarians and must
also contain the hashtags present in the caption. The coverage of Week One is from
September 24 – October 1, 2015.

The researcher made use of the ten (10) hashtags, specifically; #strictlibrarian,
#scarylibrarian, #librarianlook, #librarianwardrobe, #librarianglasses, #librarianbun,
#librarianhair, #librarianfashion, #librarianmode, and #librariansareawesome. These
were chosen by the researcher because, among the available hashtags found on both
social networking sites, these hashtags have a number of users with nonlibrarian
netizens. To know more about the ten (10) hashtags, the researcher writes down its
corresponding description.

- #strictlibrarian - are pictures that show netizens expressed about librarians that
  were strict about the rules and regulations of the library; an image of a girl
  wearing a typical clothing of a librarian, that some hashtags describe, was
  shushing and shows a contempt face.

- #librarianwardrobe – images that searched in this hashtag were users wore
  clothes that in conservative type. The length of the dress was below the knees
  and wore long sleeves. Netizens also associate wearing eyeglasses to a librarian
  in this post.

- #librarianfashion – in this hashtag, users shows casual look while they are out
  and about to go to their work or for a stroll around. They associate their clothes
  which were semi – formal, a high floral skirt, a blouse, a pair of eyeglasses to a
  librarian.

- #librarianhair and #librarianbun – the hashtags have the same description of the
  images. The users were forming a bun of their hair; in which most of the
  librarians does not want their hair loose to not cover their faces.

- #scarylibrarian – images shows where netizens pictured themselves with
  eyeglasses, their hair up in a bun and having unsympathetic faces. Other images
  were decorations on their public library made by their librarian during Halloween.

- #librariansareawesome – netizens who posted their pictures about how librarians
  give awesome activities in their library. The activities were hosting a fun run, and
  the proceeds of the said event will go directly to the public library and having a
book signing of a writer in their library. Users have also pictured librarians who are having a great time in the library.

- #librarianmode, #librarianglasses, and #librarianlook – these three hashtags are similar to each other. The only difference is in #librarianglasses netizen posts’ were wearing big black glasses only. In #librarianmode netizens pictured themselves with their eyeglasses and books that they currently reading and collecting, while on #librarianlook netizens pictured them as having the look of an old librarian where they are wearing corporate yet conservative clothes, hair in a bun and with their glasses on.

5. Results and Discussion

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data based on the collected results for three weeks on Facebook and Instagram. The way of representation of data follows the order of the physical appearance and values and attitude. The analysis of what common social networking site used and the image of a librarian can be drawn based on the results.

**Physical Appearance**

![Physical Appearance in Facebook and Instagram](image)

Figure 2. Physical Appearance in Facebook and Instagram

Appearances of librarians depicted in a multitude of ways. Hashtags of the posts analyzed to see trends. Six out of ten hashtags chosen by the researcher fit into the physical appearance of a librarian. Thirty – two (32) users acknowledged the #librarianlook, twenty – four users mentioned #librarianwardrobe, nineteen (19) uses state #librarianglasses, #librarianfashion has five (5) users. There were also four (4) who have indicated in their caption the #librarianhair and for #librarianbun there were two (2) users. It appears that the #librarianlook has the biggest average because the
posts in this hashtag correspond to the overall physical description of a librarian. The way the netizens associate #librarianlook with their posts is that they are wearing an eyeglasses, their hair is tied up in a bun style, and the way they dressed up in corporate yet conservative attire. The figure above shows the six hashtags on both Facebook and Instagram with their corresponding total number of hashtags existed in three weeks (see figure 2).

There are probably many ways to see the inference that made by the librarianship profession. One of it is, adopting cultural studies that can help to influence the stereotype media images of a librarian (Radford & Radford, 2003). The result supports the study of Majid & Haider in 2008, where library professionals do not have praising image and that seem to an individual who is conservatively dressed.

Values and Attitude

Figure 3. Values and Attitude in Facebook and Instagram

Librarians should able to find a correct balance between traditional roles and new roles in order to let their professional category survive and continue to be a crucial and vital part of the information society (Melchionda, 2007). Librarians have a discrepancy between the role and function of the modern librarian and the way librarian saw in a wider public (Ballig, et al., 2008). The results are the same to the Library Association Midwinter meeting in Philadelphia, it found out that librarians were typically categorized as unapproachable, aggressive and reserved (Barlett, 2014) brought forth back a manifestation of their skills and duties (Shaw, 2010).
Among the ten (10) hashtags chosen, there are four that describe the values and attitudes of the librarians. It states that netizens have a great impact towards librarians that are strict in their facial expressions and following the rules inside the premises of the library. In three weeks time, there were five (5) users who mentioned in their posts the #strictlibrarian and followed by #scarylibrarian who have four (4) users. Netizens see librarians a scary one because they have already associated in their minds that librarians are strict. On the other hand, three (3) netizens have perceived that librarians are awesome, using the #librariansareawesome. The posts with this hashtag show an eye – opening attitude of a librarian. Librarians are not just about being strict and scary as what most netizens perceived, but librarians are doing an astonishing job to help and promote the use of the library. The #librarianmode also has three (3) results in which netizens used this hashtag because they associated reading, having a lot of books and wearing eyeglasses make them a librarian.

The results gathered in both physical appearance and values and attitudes of a librarian connect with the Self - Categorization Theory and Social Judgeability Theory. The theories explain why people are generalizing all librarians and its profession that they are still and only basing their perceptions on what they have known about what librarians are:

The commonly used social networking site

Facebook and Instagram play a vital role in disseminating information on the Internet (Dewan & Kumaraguro, 2014). Within three weeks time of researching about this study, the commonly used social networking site is Instagram. There are about 106 hashtag users found on Instagram while only seven hashtag users on Facebook.

![Figure 4. Weeks 1 – 3 on Instagram](image)

In 2012, Instagram introduced the use of hashtags. There are about a countless number of hashtags that are accustomed by the netizens in one day. Based on the results of the data collected there were three (3) netizens, one for each week, perceived
them and used the #strictlibrarian. The #librarianlook was used by thirty – two (32) netizens, eleven (11) during week one, ten (10) on week two and twenty – one (21) on the week three. There was also a total of four (4) netizens who associate librarians as scary and used the #scarylibrarian, during week one there were three (3) results, one (1) on the week two and none in week three. The #librarianwardrobe used by twenty – four (24) netizens; four (4) results appeared in the week one, twelve (12) in the week two and eight (8) on the week three. The use of #librarianglasses resulted in a total of fifteen (15) users; there were five (5) hashtags appeared in the week one, eight (8) on the week two and there were only two (2) results during week three. A total of four (4) hashtags for #librarianbun has no results appeared during the week one, and two (2) hashtags appeared on both weeks two and week three. The #librarianfashion totaled into five (5) hashtags, one (1) during the week one, three (3) on the week two and one (1) on the week three. The #librarianmode has only one (1) result in three weeks, and it was only during the week 1. Lastly, the #librariansareawesome from five (5) hashtags, one (1) during the week 1, two (2) on the week 2, and one (1) on the week 3 (see figure 4).

![Figure 5. Weeks 1 – 3 on Facebook](image-url)

Based on the results shown, only three (3) hashtags that can search on Facebook provided that it is a post from a non – librarian and was on the target date of the researcher. The #librarianglasses seen during the week one and have four (4) posts. The #librarianmode have a total of two (2) hashtags and was during the week three. Also, the #librariansareawesome have one (1) hashtag during week two (see figure 5).
People frequently use hashtags on Instagram rather than on Facebook because hashtags on Instagram contain pictures that catch our eyes due to its available filters of pictures. It is certain that people will find that image interesting as well (Taylor, 2012). Filters on photos are just recently add on Facebook’s features in the middle of the year 2014. There are a number of libraries that used Instagram to attract patrons to let them ask and give suggestions to the library itself and by using specific hashtags. Moreover hashtags on Instagram are easy to search because in an Instagram app the user can type whatever hashtag he or she is looking for without including the # sign.

The researcher noticed upon searching the ten (10) hashtags, there were a few results on local stereotyping because it was not able to cover the desired date of gathering the data of the researcher. Local stereotyping of a librarian appears when a local or Filipino netizen perceived a librarian in social networking sites here in the Philippines.

6. Conclusions & Recommendations

Both positive and negative stereotyping of a librarian as a profession was seen in this study. Negative stereotyping in a way that netizens perceived librarians in social networking sites, like Facebook and Instagram, according to their physical appearances. The physical appearances are librarians as professionals that wear eyeglasses, hair in a bun, wearing corporate and conservative attires; and having faces that show unsympathetic and contemptuous expressions. The perceptions came from the following hashtags namely; #librarianbun, #librarianglasses, #librarianwardrobe, #librarianhair and #librarianfashion. Along with this, netizens also sees librarians as scary and strict in following the rules of the library from #scarylibrarian and #strictlibrarian; and that being a librarian, associate those as a just owner of books in which came from the #librarianmode. Moreover, netizens managed also to see that librarians should find a way to slowly change their image in the library physically and their attitudes towards the patrons. Regarding their physical appearances, it is not how they look and bring up their image, but it is up to the librarians’ role in what they can do to lessen and stop the stereotyping. Librarians should also be more friendly and approachable to the patrons. Though it is not excusable that librarians cannot be strictly inside the library, because librarians are only taking care of the resources, librarians should always be sensible and sensitive enough to the patrons of the library. Librarians are awesome by having great activities that the librarians are providing in their libraries and showing amazing attitudes towards the users of the library by using the #librariansareawesome.

In order for these stereotyping to lessened, there should also be a Personality Development Workshop or a Seminar for the librarianship profession; where librarians will be guided that the stereotyping still occurs in today’s era. Through workshop and seminar, librarians will gain more techniques and new ideas about the trends on how a librarian shall bring himself.
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