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SOCIAL MEDIA USE: A CATALYST FOR SERVICE DELIVERY IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined social media use: a catalyst for service delivery in academic libraries in south-south Nigeria. Four objectives and research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study (197) comprises of 82 library staff in University of Benin (UNIBEN), Edo State, 90 in University of Uyo (UNIUYO), Akwa Ibom State and 25 in Maritime Academy of Nigeria (MAN), Akwa Ibom State all in South-South Nigeria. No sample was used for the study due to the manageable size of the population. A structured questionnaire titled: “Social Media Use for Service Delivery Questionnaire (SMUSDQ) was developed in line with the research questions. Copies of the questionnaire, which contained four research questions and thirty-five items were distributed to the respondents and collected on the spot while 100 percent return-rate was achieved. Data collected with questionnaire was analysed using frequency tables and simple percentages. The findings of the study indicated that social media platforms used by library staff for services delivery include Whatsapp, Facebook, Telegram, Twitter, also that the services rendered by library staff using social media include current awareness services, display of new arrivals, reference service, posting of library and institution’s events, overdue reminder user education, document delivery service, reservation service. The study further revealed that hindrances to rendering services through social media include poor internet connectivity, erratic power supply, issues of privacy and inadequate

feedback from users, technophobia, inability to use social media tools, inadequate awareness of social media tools, poor cooperation among staff and poor finance of the library. Possible solutions to these hindrances as revealed by the study include attending workshops, seminars and conferences, constant power supply, regular internet subscription for the library, personnel training and development and unity among staff. The study concluded that libraries will serve their patrons effectively if they utilise the potentials inherent in social media for their services and will have a fast communication and responses rate from their patrons. The study recommended amongst others that academic libraries should create social media handles like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, Tiktok, blogs and so on and specifically assign a staff to manage it and make it visible to the library patrons. Also the academic library management should advocate for regular Internet subscription and use of alternative power supply like solar powered inverter for the library so that the library can always connect with its patrons at all times.

Keywords: Social Media, Academic Libraries, Service Delivery, Web Services

Introduction

The introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has completely transformed every sphere of society, and the library is not exempt from this development. This development refers to the transition from the traditional methods of providing library services to the more cutting-edge and sophisticated approaches. This progress led to a paradigm shift away from conventional media and modes of interaction, communication, and information sharing and toward a more sophisticated approach utilizing social media. Reiterating that all of librarianship is service-oriented is sufficient. In terms of its layout and purpose, the library offers services to both people and communities, as well as to those who are doing research across all areas of knowledge, whether they are in-person researchers or online learners who are not enrolled in a traditional classroom.

In light of the aforementioned context, librarianship can be regarded from two eras: the period prior to the development of information and communication technology and the subsequent period. All aspects of library services in the pre-ICT period were, at best, characterized by manual operations. In the past, university libraries were tasked with finding, choosing, acquiring, organizing, preserving, and disseminating information to their community in the shortest amount of time possible. To do this, they relied on time-consuming manual methods for the majority of their operations, including charging and discharging of materials, filing of user's cards, keeping statistical records, controlling and maintaining serials, and technical services.

However, the introduction of information and communication technology was a welcome advancement and a solution to the shortcomings present in the previous methods of library administration and service provision. In this way, ICT sparked a sea change and a 180 degree turn in the story of how libraries perform their services. Social media usage in the rendering of library services

was purportedly an offshoot of ICT. Social media use is widespread among students and teachers in the academic community, who use it to disseminate pertinent information. As an essential partner in their academic endeavors, librarians in academic libraries should make use of this medium to inform their clients and engage with them to determine their information needs. Quadri and Idowu (2016) noted that social media is quickly taking over as the preferred method for librarians to build social and professional networks. In addition to being used to connect with potential library users, social media is also being used to extend information services to other remote users, particularly those in the academic community. Social media is quickly replacing traditional methods of service delivery in libraries, especially in academic settings.

Using highly accessible and scalable publishing technologies, users develop information material for social media, according to Rogers (2012). Quadri and Idowu (2016) supported the aforementioned assertion by claiming that social media has fundamentally changed how people find, consume, and share news, information, and material. The democratization of information changes people from content readers into publishers and the integration of sociology and technology turns monologue (one-to-many) into conversation (many-to-many). Social media offers libraries a creative and successful approach to interact with their audience. Social media, according to O'Dell (2010) and Cann (2011), are internet-based platforms that enable users to create original content for use by others and themselves. Social media, according to Chu and Du (2013), are "collaborative spaces using web 2.0 technology.

Web 2.0 refers to the second generation of the World Wide Web, which is centered on enabling online collaboration and information sharing. Wikis, blogs, and web services are all considered to be parts of web 2.0. Sematic web and Web 2.0 were once used interchangeably, however despite their similarities, they do not have exactly the same meaning (<http://www.webopedia.com>).

online 2.0 heralded a shift in how the internet operated, turning it from a one-way discussion to an interactive experience between users and online producers. Web 2.0 is used by people for a variety of activities and experiences. For instance, a web 2.0 organization like a university library may use user-generated content from social media, FLICKR photos, Google maps, and other websites to create a more comprehensive user experience (in this case service from the above, it is appropriate to state that web 2.0 is increasingly fostering creation, collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the development of networks among user groups). (Rathi, Givens and Relvuan, 2011).

Therefore, Sahu (2013) claimed that social media is the medium best suited for people to communicate, distribute, and share information among themselves in the information profession, notably in libraries, universities, and colleges. The majority of academic library personnel have long recognised the value of using social media for efficient service delivery. In order to provide library services, social media platforms including WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Skype are being used. The author went on to say that librarians may share information via social media technologies on library orientation, newly added library resources, reference services, selective information sharing (SDI), and client services in general.

Statement of the Problem

The use of emerging technologies in this era of globalisation is becoming a new normal. This cut across various professions, as it affects a great deal of the way things are done in the past. Social media is one of such technologies that have touched virtually all spheres of human endeavours.

In the academic environment, it is observed that there is a high demand and usage of various social media platforms by students and staff of academic institutions. They use it for interactions, sharing information, and so on. It is

therefore imperative for library staff to tap into these media so as to keep up with the trend and deliver quality and effective services through these media to their patrons. Preliminary investigations by the researcher show that librarians and other library staff in the University of Benin, University of Uyo and Maritime Academy of Nigeria libraries use social media in course of their day to day activities. However, it is not certain the type of social media platforms used by librarians and other staff in these three libraries in South-South Nigeria, the services they render through the platforms, the challenges they encounter while using it and possible solutions to the challenges. This study is therefore embarked upon to clear these uncertainties.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives in this study are to ascertain the influence of social media use in library service delivery while the specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the social media platforms that are used by librarians for service delivery.
- ii. Determine the services rendered by librarians using social media.
- iii. Ascertain the hindrances to rendering services through social media by librarians.
- iv. Proffer possible solutions to the hindrances of rendering services through social media.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- i. How are social media use influence library services delivery
- ii. What are the social media platforms that are used by librarians for service delivery?
- iii. What are the services rendered by librarians using social media?

- iv. What are the hindrances to rendering services through social media by librarians?
- v. What are the possible solutions to the hindrances of rendering services through social media?

Scope of the Study

The study examined social media use in academic libraries in South-South Nigeria. It covered the professional librarians and library officer in the University of Benin Library, University of Uyo Library and Maritime Academy of Nigeria Library.

Literature Review

Any academic library's relevance is judged by how well it can fulfill the teaching, learning, and research responsibilities of the parent organization (the university) for which it was designed. Academic libraries must offer services to their users not only when they ask for them but also in advance if they are to remain current and efficient in doing so.

The delivery of services in libraries has evolved from the traditional to the modern in this era of globalization, employing Information and Communication Technology (ICT), one of which is social media. Social networking technologies, according to Ezeani and Eke (2010), are the most suitable Web 2.0 technology for library services. With the use of these tools, librarians will be able to communicate with and learn from their users' requirements. Additionally, these systems can allow students to post or upload photos, creating a repository for these images. According to O'Dell (2010), social media gives libraries a creative and successful approach to interact with their users. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media is an offshoot of ICT that consists of a variety of user-driven marketing channels like Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, and WhatsApp and is a group of Internet-based

applications that build on the philosophical and technological foundations of Web 2.0. The staff and customers of libraries can benefit from each of these platforms in various ways. Lehtinen (2007) discovered that various social media engagement routines are used to recreate the traditional social networks. According to the author, common activities include updating location and personal information ("status"), sharing images and events, receiving updates on friends' activities, showcasing a sizable social network, exchanging messages in private and publishing testimonials.

Olajide and Oyeniran (2014) evaluated librarians' understanding of social media and their use of it based on the aforementioned presumptions. The research found that most of them preferred using social media for personal satisfaction to library services. They conversed, talked, uploaded, asked questions, read blogs, shared photographs, and played games on social media. However, Aras (2014) stated unequivocally that the goals of academic libraries using social media are to advertise library services, improve information access, be present where users are, gather user input, and draw attention to certain library features. A survey by Mahmood and Richardson (2011) involved one hundred university libraries affiliated with the Association of Research Libraries. The survey found that Twitter was being used by 85 libraries in total for news, announcements, and other user services. In a similar vein, Mabewazara (2014) looked at how librarians in two universities in South Africa and Zimbabwe used social media. The findings indicated that the majority of librarians were familiar with a variety of social media platforms. They were familiar with LinkedIn, Google Chat, Facebook, and WhatsApp. Wikis, Twitter, YouTube, Skype, and other well-known social media platforms are also included. The librarians in one of the institutions, however, were less conversant with several social media technologies, such as FLICKS, linkedin, etc. Collins and Quan-Haase (2012) looked at how Canadian academic libraries adopted and

used social media techniques. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr were highlighted because they were thought to be the most popular social media platforms in Canada. According to the report, Twitter and Facebook were the two most popular social media platforms among university libraries. Flickr was never utilized, whereas YouTube was the least popular. By using social media, librarians might feel as though they are contributing to the academic endeavors of their community (De Rosa et al., 2007), or they can advertise the services and events that their library offer. (Charnigo & Barnett-Ellis, 2007; Hendrix et al., 2009).

According to Suraweera et al. (2016), online social networks are increasingly used by libraries and information centers and are popular with both new and seasoned library patrons. In-depth information access, sharing, and dissemination will be encouraged via social networking in libraries, which is one of the main purposes of academic libraries. According to Kwanya, Stillwell, and Underwood (2012), Kenyan library employees noted that social networking platforms improve interaction between patrons and library workers, facilitating smooth communication and feedback in the process. The most popular social media platform in libraries is Facebook, according to a study by Adewoyin, Onuoha, and Ikonne (2017) on librarians' usage of social media and service delivery in federal universities in southwest Nigeria. Adewojo and Adebara (2016) found in a similar study that librarians can use social media platforms to promote their libraries' and information services. The research's findings also showed that library staff members were familiar with Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp. The importance of social media for libraries was recognised by Ezeani and Igwesi (2012).

The usage of social networking technologies is simpler, and all that is needed except a computer, Internet access, and a skilled professional, claim Ayiah and Kumah (2011). Using alternative communication channels to let

library patrons know about the services the library offers, such as phone calls, SMS, radio, newspapers, and television, can occasionally be expensive. However, the use of online social networking in library services will be advantageous and cost-effective now that ICT technologies are readily available. However, there can be some obstacles in the way of effective social media service delivery at the library. Social media offers libraries significant prospects, according to Ezeani and Igwesi (2012). They also mentioned that librarians may advertise library and information services on these networks. Therefore, the study determined that the difficulties Nigerian libraries experience in using social media include a lack of knowledge of social media, a lack of qualified staff, a lack of government participation, bandwidth issues, technophobia, and unstable power supplies. Ossai-Ugbah (2013) offered the argument that ongoing power outages raise the expense of maintaining the library, making it challenging for staff to promote library and information services via social media in Nigerian university libraries.

In addition, Shehu, Urhefe, and Aworo (2015) in their study of accessibility and utilization of internet service in Nigeria libraries highlighted several difficulties faced by the staff when accessing the internet in Nigeria libraries. The majority of the respondents indicated that power outage and unavailability/inaccessibility of internet were some of the difficulties faced by staff when accessing the internet in Nigeria libraries. As a result, Amina and Nwanne (2015) identified power outage as one of the difficulties faced by staff when access. The study came to the conclusion that privacy concerns, a low level of technology adoption, and network issues were the biggest obstacles faced by librarians when using social media to promote library and information resources and services at university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study (197) comprises of 82 library staff in University of Benin (UNIBEN), Edo State, 90 in University of Uyo (UNIUYO), AkwaIbom State and 25 in Maritime Academy of Nigeria (MAN), AkwaIbom State all in South-South Nigeria. No sample was used for the study due to the manageable size of the population. A structured questionnaire titled: “Social Media Use for Service Delivery Questionnaire (SMUSDQ) was developed in line with the research objectives. Copies of the questionnaire, which contained four research questions and thirty-five items were distributed to the respondents and collected on the spot while 100 percent return-rate was achieved. Data collected with questionnaire was analysed using frequency tables and simple percentages.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The results obtained from the 197 copies of the research questionnaire were analysed using simple percentages and frequency tables. Note the key to tables: (**UNIBEN** = University of Benin, **UNIUYO** = University of Uyo and **MAN** = Maritime Academy of Nigeria).

Results

Research Question One

The research question sought to find out the social media platforms that are being used by library staff for service delivery. To answer the research question, percentage analysis was performed as can be seen in table 1.

Table 1: Percentage Analysis of the Social Media Platforms Used by Library Staff for Service Delivery

S/N	Social Media Platforms	UNIBEN	UNIUYO	MAN	TOTAL	%	RANK
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1.	Facebook	21	23	7	51	26%	2 nd
2.	Whatsapp	30	33	5	68	34%	1 st
3.	Twitter	5	3	3	11	6%	4 th
4.	YouTube	1	3	0	4	2%	6 th
5.	Blogs	0	1	1	2	1%	7 th
6.	Linkedin	0	0	0	0	0	8 th
7.	Flickr	0	0	0	0	0	8 th
8.	Telegram	16	20	4	40	20%	3 rd
9.	Instagram	7	0	3	10	5%	5 th
10.	Others	2	7	2	11	6%	4 th
	Total	82	90	25	197	100%	

Analysis of data from the above table reveals social media platforms used by library staff for service delivery. Respondents indicated the social media platforms used to include Whatsapp (34%), Facebook (26%), Telegram (20%), Twitter and other social media platforms (6%) respectively, Youtube (2%) and Blogs (1%). The table further indicated that Linkedin and flickr were not used for service delivery in the library.

Research Question Two

The research question sought to find out the services rendered by library staff using social media. To answer the research question, percentage analysis was performed as can be seen in table 2.

Table 2: Percentage Analysis of Services Rendered by Library Staff Using Social media

S/N	Services Rendered Using Social Media	UNIBEN	UNIUYO	MAN	TOTAL	%	RANK
1.	Current Awareness Services (CAS)	16	18	6	40	20%	1 st
2.	Reference service	10	12	2	24	12%	4 th
3.	User education	8	6	2	16	8%	6 th
4.	Document delivery service	3	4	1	8	4%	7 th
5.	Reservation service	1	4	1	6	3%	8 th
6.	Overdue reminder	6	8	3	17	9%	5 th

7.	Display of new arrivals	15	13	5	33	17%	2 nd
8.	Chatting	14	15	3	32	16%	3 rd
9.	Posting of library and the institution's events	7	9	2	18	9%	5 th
10.	Others	2	1	0	3	2%	9 th
Total		82	90	25	197	100%	

Analysis of data from the above table reveals services rendered using social media. Respondents indicated that services rendered are current awareness services (20%), display of new arrivals (17%), chatting (16%), reference service (12%), posting of library and institution's events and overdue reminder with (9%) respectively, user education (8%), document delivery service (4%), reservation service with (3%) and others (2%).

Research Question Three

The research question sought to find out the hindrances to rendering services through social media. To answer the research question, percentage analysis was performed as can be seen in table 3.

Table 3: Percentage Analysis of Hindrances to Rendering Services Through Social Media

S/N	Hindrances to Rendering Services through Social Media	UNIBEN	UNIUYO	MAN	TOTAL	%	RANK
1.	Inadequate awareness of social media tools	4	5	2	11	6%	5 th
2.	Erratic power supply	18	13	1	32	16%	2 nd
3.	Poor internet connectivity	22	27	3	52	26%	1 st
4.	Inability to use social media tools	5	7	3	15	8%	4 th
5.	Poor cooperation among staff	3	3	5	11	6%	5 th
6.	Poor finance of the library	5	2	2	9	4%	6 th
7.	Technophobic	7	6	2	15	8%	4 th
8.	Issue of privacy	9	10	3	22	11%	3 rd
9.	Inadequate feedback from users	7	12	3	22	11%	3 rd
10.	Others	2	5	1	8	4%	6 th
	Total	82	90	25	197	100%	

Analysis of data from the above table reveals hindrances to rendering services through social media. Respondents indicated that the hindrances include poor internet connectivity (26%), erratic power supply (16%), issues of privacy and inadequate feedback from users with (11%) respectively, technophobic and inability to use social media tools with (8%) respectively, inadequate awareness of social media tools and poor cooperation among staff with (6%) respectively and poor finance of the library and others (4%) respectively.

Research Question Four

The research question sought to find out the possible solutions to the hindrances of rendering services through social media. To answer the research question, percentage analysis was performed as can be seen in table 4.

Table 4: Percentage Analysis of the Possible Solutions to the Hindrances of Rendering Services through Social Media

S/N	Possible Solutions to the Hindrances of Rendering Services through Social Media	UNIBEN	UNIUYO	MAN	TOTAL	%	RANK
1.	Attending workshops, seminars and conferences	18	22	9	49	25%	1 st
2.	Regular Internet subscription for the library	17	19	6	42	21%	3 rd
3.	Constant power supply	20	21	3	44	23%	2 nd
4.	Unity among staff	12	12	2	26	13%	5 th
5.	Personal training and development	15	16	5	36	18%	4 th
	Total	82	90	25	197	100%	

Analysis of data from the above table reveals possible solutions to the hindrances of rendering services through social media. Respondents indicated that the possible solutions are attending workshops, seminars and conferences (25%), constant power supply (23%), regular internet subscription for the library (21%), personal training and development (18%) and unity among staff (13%).

Discussion of Findings

The results of the percentage analysis in table 1 showed the social media platforms used by library staff for services delivery. Whatsapp, Facebook, Telegram, Twitter, other platforms, Youtube and Blogs were some of the social media platforms used by library staff for service delivery as indicated by the respondents from the various libraries under study. However, social media platforms like LinkedIn and flickr are not used for service delivery in the libraries. This finding agrees with Collins and Quan-Haase (2012) who examined the adoption and usage patterns of social media tools by academic libraries in Canada and discovered that Twitter was the most used social media tool among the academic libraries and was followed by Facebook. YouTube was the least used while Flickr was not used at all. Adewojo and Adebara (2016) further corroborated the study by stating that library staff can use social media platforms for marketing library and information services. The study also

corroborates Adewoyin, Onuoha and Ikonne (2017) who posited that most used social media tool in libraries is Facebook.

The results of data analysis in table 2 showed the services rendered by library staff using social media. This include current awareness services, display of new arrivals, chatting, reference service, posting of library and institution's events and overdue reminder, user education, document delivery service, reservation service and others. In contrast with the respondents' opinion, Olajide and Oyeniran (2014) revealed in their study that most of them use social media for personal instead of library services. They used social media for chatting, gisting, uploading, asking questions, reading blogs, sharing pictures and playing games.

Furthermore, respondents in table 3 indicated hindrances to rendering services through social media to include poor internet connectivity, erratic power supply, issues of privacy and inadequate feedback from users, technophobia, inability to use social media tools, inadequate awareness of social media tools and poor cooperation among staff, poor finance of the library and others. This finding is in line with Ezeani and Igwesi, (2012) who posited that the challenges Nigerian libraries face in the use of social media include lack of awareness of social media, lack of trained staff, lack of Government intervention, bandwidth problem, technophobia, and unreliable power supply. Also, the finding is in line with the opinion of Amina and Nwanne (2015) who stated that some of the hindrances to the use of social media for service delivery in academic libraries are privacy concerns, low level of technology penetration and network problems.

In the same vein, the finding in table 4 indicated possible solutions to the hindrances of using social media for service delivery in academic libraries. The finding revealed the possible solutions to be attending workshops, seminars and

conferences, constant power supply, regular internet subscription for the library, personal training and development and unity among staff. This finding is in consonance with Omini and Osuolale (2019) who are of the opinion that social media platforms should be encouraged in Nigerian tertiary institutions libraries through the provision of subsidised internet access to all offices in the library and workshops should be organised to educate library staff on the importance of promoting social media platforms as an integral part of library services.

Conclusion

Libraries will serve their patrons effectively if they utilise the potentials in social media for their services and will have a fast communication and responses from their patrons. The use of social media in academic libraries cannot be overemphasised especially in this era of globalisation. The library cannot afford to be left behind as technology has penetrated every sector. It is expected that library staff especially in academic libraries tap into the potentials of these social media tools for service delivery as this media is heavily used in the academic environment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Academic libraries should create social media handles like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, Tiktok, blogs and so on and specifically assign a staff to manage it and make it visible to the library patrons.
2. Library services like current awareness services, overdue reminder, referral services, display of new arrivals, and so on should be rendered in academic libraries to patrons rather than chatting and using them for other personal purposes.

3. Academic library management should advocate for regular internet subscription and use of alternative power supply like inverter for the library so that the library can always connect with its patrons at all times.
4. Library staff should be trained regularly on the use of various web technologies so that they can effectively utilise them for service delivery.

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