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The Role of Social Media in Collaborative Library and Information Science Education: Nigerian Perspective

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Abstract

Collaboration is highly required in today's educational setting to guarantee that abilities, flairs, skills and knowledge are dispersed to peers as extensively as possible. The objective of this study was to examine the assumption of social media in curriculum development, education and research in Library and Information Science (LIS) the Nigerian perspective. The study reviewed the Library and Information Science Educational scenario in Nigeria, the LIS Education in Nigeria is offered at various levels ranging from National Diploma (ND), Higher National Diploma (HND), BLS/BLIS, PGD, MLS/MLIS and Ph.D. These Library and Information Science Education programs are offered on regular basis, part-time as well as distance education. The study also identified various social media tools that enhance collaboration in Library and Information Science Education. The study examined the perception of Library and Information Science professionals in Nigeria towards collaboration, the areas they collaborate, their level of collaboration, benefits derivable and challenges experienced by these professionals. The research gathered evidence on the effectiveness of the role of social media in facilitating collaboration and its prospective future as a facilitator and

enhancer of learning in the Library and Information Science profession. The study drew inference from the perceptions of the Library Information Science professionals in Nigeria as regards the assumption of social media for educational and curriculum enrichment purposes, that is the areas social media can be used in collaborative Library Information Science education. These include: social media use in classroom learning, social media as collaborative learning platform, social media's role in promoting distance education and learning, social media as a collaborative tool to enrich research.

Introduction

Simply put, collaboration means "The act of working with someone (either an individual or group) to achieve something". Collaboration is essential more than ever now to help organizations and persons to be able to be sustained and strive in current international environment. In recent times, there has been an increasing interest and growth of collaborative activities in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS). Collaboration is adopted widely by stake holders in LIS and it has been practiced in many areas such as students exchange programs, workshops, seminars (webinars), conferences (e-conferencing), academic accreditation of courses, resource sharing, teaching, research, distance learning (virtual learning) etc. Educational systems are developing and this change requires collaboration to keep up with the trend. Collaboration in educational system can help to build stronger LIS professionals who work in the direction to achieve collective objectives, enhancement of subject and growing students' constructive results.

There are several Social Media and Social Networking Sites (SNS), with varying technological tools, ancillary to a wide variety of benefits and practices, it has changed the way people interact and communicate it also has huge possibility to shape the learning ability of people (Aftab & Naushad Ali, 2018). Though the use of social media generally is mainly for encouraging social engagements as the name suggests, rather educational i.e. SNSs promotes social communication and makes it easy for people to exchange information and share interests but they are yet to discover the inherent prospects in scholastic advancement of the society.

This consequently is fast changing within the academia in Nigeria where educators and librarians are collaborating on social media unlike before. The educators are making astute use of varieties of social sites in order to create ideal, normal atmosphere for education and research to take place. This study examines the trend in tertiary institutions in Nigeria also explores the

imminent prospects of the role of SNSs as a substitute complement to customary teaching and learning.

LIS Educational Scenario in Nigeria

The LIS Education in Nigeria is offered at various levels ranging from National Diploma (ND), Higher National Diploma (HND), BLS/BLIS, MLS/MLIS and Ph.D. These LIS Education programmes are offered on regular basis, part-time as well as distance education. It is important to understand the concept curriculum. Eisner (2014) in Ezeh (2018) sees curriculum as a series of deliberate measures that are anticipated to have educational significances. He proceeds to address the conduct and operational consequences that are inherent to any curriculum in actions thereby signifying that the concept of curriculum is essentially a plan in action. A curriculum is the total educational experience provided by a university, college or school. It includes the content of courses (the syllabus), the methods employed (strategies) and other aspects like norms and values which relate to the way the university/school is organized. It outlines the skills, presentations; attitudes and values students are anticipated to learn from schooling.

Edegbo (2015) citing Ocholla (2007) sees a curriculum as a important part of any education or training programme basically because it makes available not only a list of courses or elements offered in a programme, but it also gives information on content, purpose, method, time/duration, trainers and location or situation of a successful dispensation of manpower training and education. Curriculum, according to Aina (2007), must be in line with the prerequisite of both the current and potential employers of library and information science trainees, and the curriculum must be appropriate to the immediate environment and as well replicate international practices.

According to Edegbo, (2011) citing (Igwe, 2005; Nzotta, 1978) the first library school in Nigeria dates back to 1960, at the University College Ibadan. Historically, Aina, (2007) discovered that the first LIS curriculum designed in Nigeria was in 1963 after the Institute of Librarianship at the University of Ibadan resolved to jettison the Library Association (UK) Examination. The university decided to develop its curriculum because it was obvious that the training offered at Ibadan then was preparing graduates for the British. The curriculum consisted mainly of (Historical, social, economic and administrative background of libraries: book art: bibliography and reader services; technical services and types of libraries). This curriculum was also critiqued as not replicating situation in Nigeria, however in 1975; the

programme was given a face-lift to include courses such as oral information and rural information and community services and since then, many LIS schools in Nigeria have, over the years, been redesigning curricula for their various programmes.

According to Simisaye (2014), there is need for synchronization and regulation of curricula of Nigerian library schools and it calls on National Association of Library and Information Science Educators (NALISE), Nigerian Library Association and Nigerian Librarian Registration Council and other stake holder to realize this. Kamba, (2011); Simisaye, (2014) observed the need to beef up the curriculum with ICT related courses, they suggested the following courses be incorporated into the curriculum to make graduates more efficient in the work place: basic computer skills, introduction to Internet and web resources, web design and management, computer application, database structure and management, online information retrieval, networking and data communication, audio-visuals, management, Digitization of library resources, computer installation management and trouble-shooting, library automation, information architecture, and recent issues in ICT application in library and information centres.

Ezeh (2018) in her study among post-graduate students at University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), observed that students need to be trained adequately in ICT and trending social media skills she recommended that: ICT-oriented courses such as inforpreneurship, web technology, library automation, electronic publishing, library architecture and project management, database management and design, cyber space management, information systems and services, among others, should be included in the LIS curriculum and be made major courses; there should be an urgent review of the LIS curriculum to remove some outdated traditional courses and incorporate new ICT courses; the department of LIS, UNN should include computer science in their combination instead of other combinations because the students need computer knowledge in this ICT era.

Nwalo (2013) affirms that Library and Information science education in Nigeria today cannot be relevant without effective preparation of new generation of Librarians to effectively use the new Information and Communication Technology in their professional practices. Opara (2016) quoting Udoh (2012) confirms that for the Nigerian library schools to face the challenges of the 21st century, the information studies programmes in the various Nigerian library schools should emphasize information technology both in the theory and practice.

Findings

Part 1: The first part of the findings deals with the perception of LIS professionals to collaboration, the areas of collaboration, benefits and challenges related with collaboration.

Perception of LIS professionals towards collaboration.

General perception of LIS professionals towards collaborative teaching was investigated. The responses are given below:

TABLE 1:   Perception of LIS professionals towards collaboration.

PERCEPTION	SA	A	D	SD
I do better when I collaborate	50.98% (52)	37.25% (38)	1.96% (2)	-
Collaboration enables me to gain more knowledge	68.63% (70)	24.51% (25)	-	-
It enables me to acquire new skills	66.67% (68)	26.47% (27)	-	-
It provides opportunity for sharing ideas and knowledge	77.45% (79)	19.61% (20)	-	-
I dislike it because the collaborating partner can steal my knowledge	7.84% (8)	17.65% (18)	24.51% (25)	25.49% (26)
It invades my professional privacy	1.96% (2)	19.61% (20)	24.51% (25)	25.49% (26)
It is necessary for making the profession better	60.78% (62)	24.51% (25)	0.98% (1)	-
It enhances networking among LIS professionals/colleagues	67.65% (69)	20.59% (21)	0.98% (1)	-

From the responses virtually all the respondents agree that they do better when they collaborate and it enables them gain more knowledge and new skills, providing opportunity for sharing ideas and knowledge. It is necessary for making the profession better, and enhance networking among LIS professionals. This result shows that LIS professionals have an optimistic approach towards collaborative teaching and research.

CHART 1:   Perception of LIS professionals towards collaboration

7. What is your perception towards collaboration? (Please tick as are applicable one in each row)
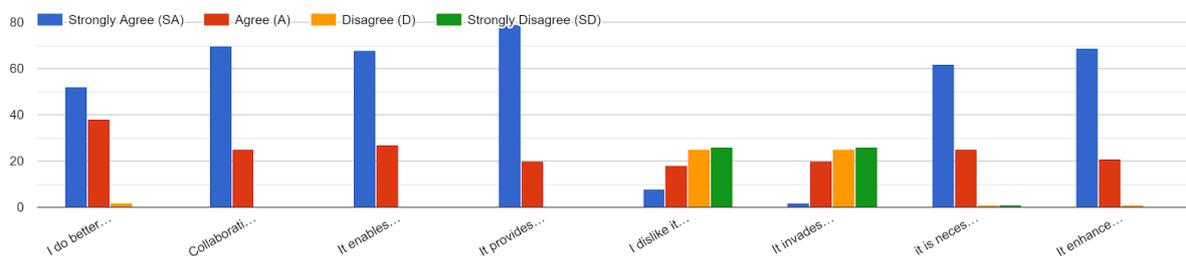
Areas of Collaboration

The researchers tried to find out the areas in which LIS professionals are interested to collaborate. The responses are shown in the table below:
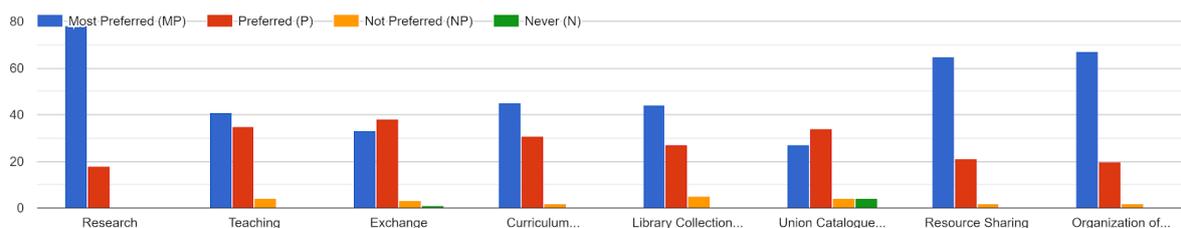
TABLE 2:   Areas of Collaboration

Areas of collaboration	MOST PREFERRED	PREFERRED	NOT PREFERRED	NEVER
Research	76.47% (78)	17.65% (18)	-	-
Teaching	40.20% (41)	34.31% (35)	3.92% (4)	-
Exchange Programme	32.35% (33)	37.25% (38)	3.92% (4)	-
Curriculum planning and development	44.12% (45)	30.39% (31)	1.96% (2)	-
Library collection development	43.14% (44)	26.47% (27)	4.90% (5)	-
Catalogue card production (Production of Union Catalogue)	26.47% (27)	32.35% (33)	3.92% (4)	3.92% (4)
Resources sharing	63.73% (65)	20.95% (21)	1.96% (2)	-
Organization of workshop, conferences, seminars, training, etc.	65.69% (67)	19.61% (20)	1.96% (2)	-

The responses reveal that the respondents collaborate more or less in all areas but their most preferred fields are research, organization of workshop, conferences, seminars, trainings, etc. and resource sharing.

CHART 2:   Areas of Collaboration

8. What areas as LIS professional are you interested to collaborate? (Please tick as are applicable one in each row)

Level of Collaboration

The responses to the level of collaborations are shown in the tables below:
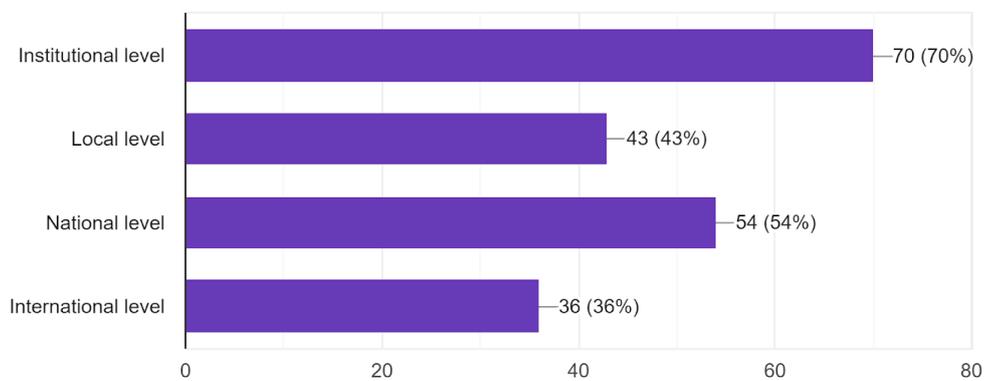
TABLE 3:   Level of Collaboration

Level of Collaboration	%
Institutional level	68.63% (70)
Local level	42.16% (43)
National level	52.94% (54)
International level	35.29% (36)

It may be unfortunate to state that majority of respondents are collaborating only on institutional level. This refrains them from harnessing the true potential of collaboration.

CHART 3:   Level of Collaboration

9. What is/are your level of collaboration(s)? (Please tick as many as are applicable)
100 responses

Benefits of Collaboration

In this query, researchers tried to ascertain the benefits associated with collaboration. The results are tabulated below:

TABLE 4:   Benefits of Collaboration

Benefits of Collaboration	SA	A	D	SD
Creates room for professional interaction	73.53% (75)	22.55% (23)	-	-
Paves way for exchange of ideas, knowledge and experience	74.51% (76)	20.59% (21)	0.98% (1)	-
Let us know about what's happening in LIS field in other institutions	76.47% (78)	7.84% (8)	0.98% (1)	-
Creates opportunity for improvement of profession	68.63% (70)	24.51% (25)	0.98% (1)	-
Platform to gain support for initiatives	51.96% (53)	39.22% (40)	2.94% (3)	-
Helps in professional improvement of an individual	62.75% (64)	30.39% (31)	1.96% (2)	-

It gives room for cross fertilization of knowledge	65.69% (67)	27.45% (28)	1.96% (2)	-

The analysis of the table above reveals that the LIS professionals agree with the benefits highlighted in the options, and they accord with the fact that it creates ways for professional interactions and keep them aware of the trends in the field and furthermore improves their professional and personal upgrade.

CHART 4: **Benefits of Collaboration**

10. What benefits have you derived from collaboration(s)? (Please tick as are applicable one in each row)
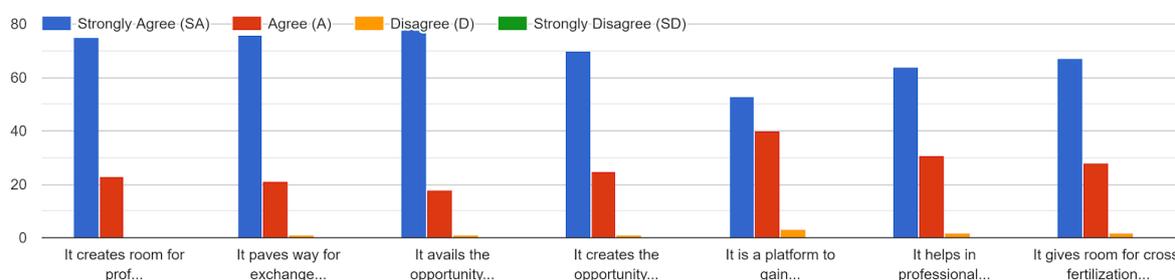
Challenges Associated with Collaboration

To ascertain the challenges associated with collaboration, the respondents responded as shown in the table below:

TABLE 5: **Challenges Associated with Collaboration**

Challenges	SA	A	D	SD
Threat to independence and privacy	10.78% (11)	26.47% (27)	44.12% (45)	6.86% (7)
Lack of trust and confidence on other people	16.67% (17)	37.25% (38)	35.29% (36)	3.92% (4)
Challenge of cultural and religious background	17.65% (18)	29.41% (30)	37.25% (38)	2.94% (3)
Complicated procedures	11.76% (12)	37.25% (38)	33.33% (34)	2.94% (3)
Lack of knowledge of how to collaborate	9.80% (10)	22.55% (23)	43.14% (44)	11.76% (12)
Lack of confidence to perform in a group	8.82% (9)	29.41% (30)	36.27% (37)	14.71% (15)
Confidence that I can do better alone	14.71% (15)	17.65% (18)	52.94% (54)	4.90% (5)

As shown in the result, respondents stated that challenges of cultural and religious background, lack of trust and confidence on other people, complicated procedures were the major challenges affecting collaboration from the highlighted options.

CHART 5:   Challenges Associated with Collaboration

11. What challenges have you experienced from collaboration? (Please tick as are applicable one in each row)
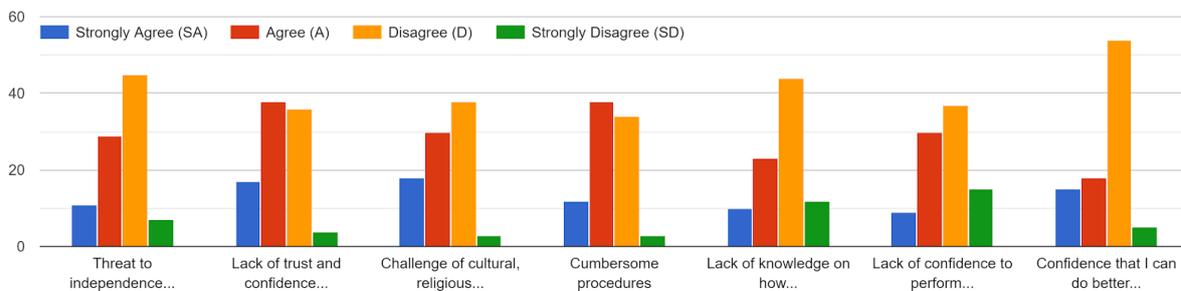
Part 2

In this part of the analysis the researchers tried to investigate the role of social media platforms in collaboration in which they tried to study the general outlook of LIS professionals towards collaboration through social media platforms and also to find out how these LIS professionals are making use of these platforms for educational and research purposes.

Role of Social Media in Collaboration

The opinion of respondents regarding role of social media in collaborative LIS education is shown in the table below:

TABLE 6:   Role of Social Media in Collaboration

Role of Social Media in Collaboration	SA	A	D	SD
Social media can be a valuable tool for collaborative learning	74.15% (76)	23.53% (24)	0.98% (1)	-
Social media plays a great role in enhancing learning	62.75% (64)	33.33% (34)	0.98% (1)	-
Blogs and portals help you to get connected to peer professional community	49.02% (50)	42.16% (43)	0.98% (1)	-
E-learning platforms help in context development of courses	51.96% (53)	42.16% (43)	0.98% (1)	-

E-learning platforms are helpful in self educational purposes	53.92% (55)	42.16% (43)	-	-
Social media help you to be in touch with recent trends in research	64.71% (66)	31.37% (32)	-	-
Social media help for information dissemination and communication	73.53% (75)	21.57% (22)	-	0.98% (1)
Webinars are helpful for enhancement of learning and education	61.76% (63)	32.35% (33)	0.98% (1)	-
Social media have positive impact on collaboration	61.76% (63)	31.37% (32)	0.98% (1)	-

The results showed the attitude of LIS professionals is very optimistic towards these social media platforms and majority agree that these social media platforms have positive impact on collaboration and they help individuals to be aware of recent trends in the field and also help them in information dissemination and communication.

CHART 6:   Role of Social Media in Collaboration

12. What role(s) do social media play in collaboration? (Please tick as are applicable one in each row)
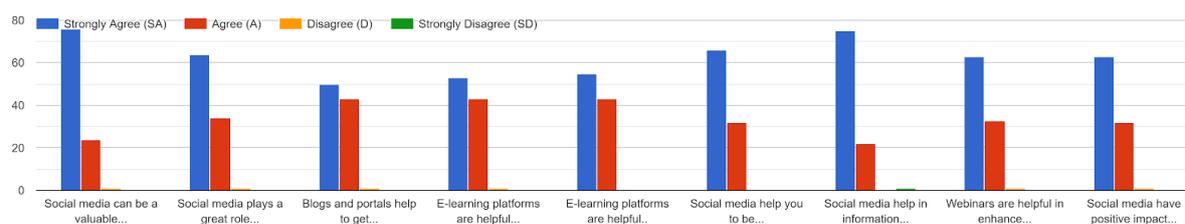
Areas of Use of Social Media Collaborative LIS Education
The paper went further to segregate the use of social media in collaborative LIS education among Nigeria in the following areas. These include: social media use in LIS education as an aid to traditional curriculum, social media as collaborative learning platform, social media's role in promoting distance education and finally social media as a tool to enrich research. All the data collected was tabulated and then collapsed into these four themes for discussion.

TABLE 7:   Areas of Collaboration via Social Media

Purpose of Collaboration	Facebook	Twitter	WhatsApp	YouTube	Blog	Telegram	Webinar	Google Scholar	Res
Classroom teaching	13.73% (14)	-	2.92% (4)	4.90% (5)	-	2.94% (3)	76.47% (78)	-	-
Dispersion of course material	15.69% (16)	-	100% (102)	3.93% (4)	39.22% (40)	76.47% (78)	2.94% (3)	-	-
Collaborative learning platform	71.76% (63)	26.47% (27)	96.08% (98)	30.39% (31)	5.88% (6)	74.51% (76)	76.47% (78)	-	-

Promoting distance education	66.67% (68)	33.33% (34)	99.02% (101)	53.92% (55)	50% (51)	75.49% (77)	76.47% (78)	-	-
Enriching research	7.84% (8)	2.94% (3)	-	3.92% (4)	60.78% (62)	1.96% (2)	1.96% (2)	78.43% (80)	78.

a. Social Media Use in Classroom learning

This study tried to highlight on different ways in which social media can be integrated in classrooms to enhance student learning process. For instance, 78 (76%) respondents under study expressed that they use webinar to enhance classroom teaching. WhatsApp and Telegram are excellent medium to disperse course materials. There are certain Blogs that cater to needs of LIS professionals and Facebook pages dedicated to specific educational courses.

b. Social Media as Collaborative Learning Platform

This study focuses on how these platforms are used as a collaborative environment for education, and as a virtual learning platform and also on their use as tutoring and counseling platform. This study shows that majority of respondents make use of various academic social media such as Twitter and YouTube as a common collaboration platform, however many respondents resort to use of WhatsApp 101 (96%), Webinar 78 (76%), Telegram 76 (75%) and Facebook 63 (71%) as they are comparatively more popular and are used for social awareness as well.

c. Social Media's Role in Promoting Distance Education and Learning

In this paper we have tried to access the role of social media in promoting distance education and it was found out that many of them are making use of platforms such as Facebook 68(67%), WhatsApp 101 (99%), Telegram 77 (75%) and Webinar 78 (76%) amongst others to provide learning material. This is far easier than traditional methods when reading material was literally sent to readers via post or mails. Now these sites act as hosts where one can upload their material or provide links to them. Many professionals are resorting to Blogs 51 (50%) and YouTube 55 (54%) to upload their content.

d. Social Media as a Collaborative Tool to Enrich Research

Lastly this paper focuses on ways social media serve as a medium to enrich Library and Information Science research both on an individual level and on collective level as well. This paper reveals that respondents use platforms such as Google Scholar 80 (78%), Researchgate 80 (78%), Blogs 62 (61%). The respondents asserted that these social media make them more visible to the community as well as helps them to portray their literature and intellectual content to a large and diverse audience. It also helps them a great deal to be up to date with the recent trends in the field in a most effortless way.

CHART 7:   Areas of Collaboration via Social Media

Area of Use of Social Media for Collaborative LIS Education

Legend: Facebook | Twitter | WhatsApp | YouTube | Blogs | Telegram | Webinar | GoogleScholar | Researchgate | Others

Categories: Classroom Teaching | Dispersion of Course Materials | Collaborative Learning Platform | Promoting Distance Education | Enriching Research

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