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Librarians' Perception on the use of Social Media as a tool for Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Benue State

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Abstract

The paper uses the descriptive survey research design. The targeted population for this study will consist of all 200 level students of University of Agriculture, Makurdi 200 level students of Benue State University and 200 level students of University of Mkar, Mkar and lecturers. Random sampling technique will be used to draw 100 students and 150 lecturers from the population making a total number of 250. The data collected use descriptive statistics analysis to generate frequencies and percentages to answer the research questions. Findings of the paper show that social media in preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID19) tertiary institutions in Benue state. The respondents revealed that social media is being used for circulation of information in the public and also being used for educational purpose at times. However, many agreed that social media is effective for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID19) and it was agreed too that it should be used for prevention. Furthermore, it was revealed that there is no specific social media network for the institutions, hence librarian are not using social media to facilitate information dissemination process in tertiary institutions in Benue state. Findings on the benefits of Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State Six question items were presented to the respondents three of the question items were accepted based on the 2.50 decision point set in the study. The accepted question items were social media usage will facilitate information dissemination process effectively, there will be easy access to information. The rejected question items include Social media make librarian to stay in touch with their study. The overall mean was 2.60 representing 65.0%, this implies that the use of social media in preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) has benefits. Findings reveal factors inhibiting Librarian using Social Media as a tool for

preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State tertiary institutions. Six question items were presented to the respondents four of the question items were accepted based on 2.50m decision point set in the study. The accepted question items include lack of facilities hinders the use of social media, poor internet facilities, misuse of the media and poor knowledge on how to manipulate social media in preventing coronavirus two question items were rejected based which include poor knowledge of the use of social media and possibility of bringing distraction. The overall mean was 2.63 representing 65.8%, this implies that there are factors inhibiting Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State. Findings also show on the challenges to effective use of social media in tertiary institutions in Benue state. Six question items were presented; five of the question items were rejected based on 2.50 decision point set in the study. The accepted question items are, inadequate facilities, poor technical know-how, expensive to use, poor power supply and attitude towards the usage. The only rejected question item was poor knowledge on the use. The overall mean was 2.69 representing 67.3%. This implies that there are challenges to effective use of social media in preventing the spread of coronavirus in Benue state among others. The paper recommended that university management must design time and opportunities for the use of social media activities in campus, Both librarian and public must be open to learning and using new social media approaches that extend and enhance librarian-public interactions, Class size needs to be limited to areas on cable number that will enhance effective use of social media and University management and policy makers must be prepared to allocate more time to supporting social media components. Both instructors and students must be open to learning and using new social media approaches that extend and enhance librarian-public interactions. University management or policy makers should encourage all librarians to use social media for academic purposes.

Key Words: Librarians, Perception, Use, Social Media and Covid-19

Introduction

Librarian is a person who works professionally in a library, providing access to information and sometimes social or technical programming to users. In addition, librarians provide instruction on information literacy. A person trained in library science and engaged in library service, a person in charge of a library, especially the chief administrative officer of a library. a person who is in charge of any specialized body of literature, as a collection of musical scores.

The library plays a vital role in academic institution in providing information services and resources to support users in their studies and research activities. The academic library needs to create a conducive environment that will entice the users in visiting the library for their information needs. Gama (2013) opined that library users have equal access to information

resources and the library gives opportunity to users to learn individually in area of information interest. The library assists the users in their academic achievement and also prepares individual for productivity in their employment. According to Nwalo (2003), the library users are undisputedly, the most important component in any library environment because the mission of every academic library is to provide excellent services to the users.

Academic library plays a vital role in every institution, by offering services to postgraduate students, researchers and other users. The role of academic library is to provide and maintain standard intellectual resources that will stimulate users' interest in promoting and adding value to such institution. Barker- Mathews and Costello, (2011), the library is highly regarded as the heart and brain box of the intellectual activities of the university. In the same vein, Brown and Malenfant (2015) asserted that the quality of a university is measured by the services provided by the library because of its unique position in the over-all system. Salman, Mostert and Mugwisi, (2013) opined that if library users do not have their needs met, they may fail to achieve their goals and this will serve as a detriment to library, because it fails to satisfy its users' information needs. Library patrons desire a quality service provided in a friendly and courteous manner.

The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19), which was first identified in China in December 2019, is a new strain that has not been previously seen in humans. Available data suggest over 2,800 fatalities in 10 countries and 83,000 infections across 56 countries worldwide as at February 28, 2020. Information about COVID-19 is everywhere and continues to grow as the pandemic spreads. Conspiracy theories about the origin/purpose of coronavirus, recipes and mixtures for miracle cures, pseudo-religious advice and postulations and mindboggling figures about the spread of the virus are flying everywhere in online spaces. These are provoking fear, panic and

exposing Africans to fake news that may aid heightened onslaught of the virus. The UN Secretary-General António Guterres had posited that the danger now is no more just the virus which is the ‘common enemy but the growing surge of misinformation’ thus ‘we need to urgently promote facts and science, hope and solidarity over despair and division’ (African Library and Information Associations and Institutions, 2020).

Misinformation thrives more where there is illiteracy, especially the inability to understand and evaluate information itself as well as the source(s). Africa is lagging behind in world’s averages on literacy levels. This makes the continent a fertile ground for misinformation about COVID-19. Most importantly, this pandemic has the capacity to overwhelm the below average healthcare facilities of most countries in the continent considering the disease burdens they already carry. Lack of bed spaces in hospitals and isolation centres, inadequate ventilators, limited testing capacities and insufficient number of medical personnel are the realities in most African countries as COVID-19 continues to spread in the continent with an expected peak in late to mid-April, 2020 (African Library and Information Associations and Institutions, 2020).

Misinformation about COVID-19 is engendering false hopes and generating fear, promoting quackery as well as undermining scientifically proven pathways that curb the spread of the virus such as social distancing, staying at home, proper hand washing and use of hand sanitizers. This endangers lives, and allows the pandemic to spread more and more. Ordinarily, managing information effectively for routine situations is critical. During periods of crisis, how information is handled is most crucial and could make all the difference between positive outcomes and exacerbated scenarios! WHO Regional Office for Africa is actively helping the continent through trainings, guidelines on how to deal with the pandemic, donation of test kits and helping to

counter disinformation and is guiding countries on setting up call centres to ensure the public is informed (African Library and Information Associations and Institutions, 2020).

As of April 5, 2020, the number of confirmed cases in the world has risen to 1,136,851 among which the total number of fatalities is 62,955 and a total of 208 countries have been affected. Spain and Italy have the largest amount of outbreak in Europe as of now with 124736 and 124632 number of cases respectively whereas in the world scenario the United States is leading with 273808 cases. Countries like India with the second largest population have only 3374 numbers of cases by now with 77 fatalities. Similarly, Australia has 5635 cases with only 34 deaths and a country with the largest landmass like Russia has only 4731 cases with 43 deaths (WHO, 2020). The drastic difference in these data is due to the effective immediate strategies implemented by the countries to minimize the risk of COVID-19 (Leeuwen, 2020).

It is therefore understandable why drastic responses are needed from all sectors to contain the spread of the pandemic in Africa. AfLIA believes that as managers of information, African librarians cannot afford to stay on the side lines and act unconcerned. Information literacy is the turf of libraries and librarians all over the world. AfLIA adjudges that this is the time for librarians to carve a space for themselves in the forefront against the continued march of the virus, by disseminating correct, reliable, relevant information that will make Africans concerned without instigating panic and bursting myths and disinformation that can help the pandemic wax strong in the continent.

Libraries and librarians need to re-educate themselves on the virus, preventative measures and pass on the information in as many spaces as possible. Physical gatherings are no longer viable. Use of social media platforms and messaging apps are veritable platforms for dissemination of

information. This can be pictorially repackaged in local languages to make it more attractive and impactful using Canva and Vennage, among others. Also share your repackaged information on AfLIA's Facebook page and tag on Twitter @AfLIACon using the hashtag #COVID19FactCheck. AfLIA had produced this resource titled, "Corona Virus (COVID-19) Awareness: What can African Librarians do?" to help librarians understand what the virus is, how it spreads and how it can be contained through hygienic practices. Access resource in English, French and Portuguese (African Library and Information Associations and Institutions, 2020).

The concept was coined officially by Tim O'Reilly and Dale Dougherty. It is regarded as a place where everyone can add or edit information or a web where digital tools allow users to create, change and publish dynamic content (Okike, Terna and Beetseh, 2019, Tion, Ilo and Beetseh, 2019 and Tor-Akwer, 2019). According to O'Reilly (2005), Social media can be defined as "the network as platform, spanning all connected devices; social media applications are those that make the most of the built-in advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an 'architecture of participation,' and going beyond the page metaphor of social media to deliver rich user experiences".

Boyd and Ellison (2008) define social media sites as web-based services that allow individuals to construct profiles, display user connections, and search and traverse within that list of connections. Albeit very relevant, social networking is only one layer of social media technology (SMT). Social media technology is complex, much like "a riddle, wrapped in a

mystery, inside an enigma” that is continuously being investigated and briefly understood before it changes once more. As each application is experienced, other innovative technologies rapidly emerge, enabling new utilities for users. Over the last ten years, a proliferation of differentiated services have shown this to be true as micro-blogging sites such as Twitter, location-based services like Foursquare, and consumer review platforms including Yelp have all worked collaboratively to provide a totally new and engaged media experience, which has now become more accessible through mobile devices (Reuben, 2008).

Objective of the Study

The main purpose of the study is investigating librarians’ perception on the use of social media as a tool for Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Benue State. Specific objectives are:

1. To ascertain if librarian use social media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State.
2. To examine the benefits of Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State.
3. To identify the factors inhibiting Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State.
4. To identify the challenges to effective use Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (Covid 19) in Benue State.
5. To proffer solution to the problems mentioned.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions:

1. Do Librarians use Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State?
2. What are the benefits of Librarians using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State?
3. What are the factors inhibiting Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State?
4. What are the challenges pose Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State?
5. What are the solutions to the problems mentioned?

Methodology

The researcher will use the descriptive survey research design to gather data collected based on librarians perception on using social media as a tool for preventing the spread of Coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State. The survey method would be most appropriate because it is unique in enhancing the development of education process and good for handling data from heterogeneous population. The study will be carried out at tertiary institutions in Benue State to investigate Librarian Perception on Using Social Media as a tool for Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State. The targeted population for this study will consist of 82 librarian of University of Agriculture, Makurdi 53 librarian of Benue State University and 35 librarian of University of Mkar, Mkar and lecturers. Thus, the population of librarians in Tertiary Institutions in Benue State is estimated at one hundred and seventy (170).A sample size is limited number of elements selected from population which is a representative of that population. That is a sample is a representative of whole population (Singh and Masuku 2012). While

sampling according to Singh and Masuku (2012) is the act of selecting a portion of a population for investigation. Random sampling technique will be used to draw 170 librarians from the population making a total number of 170. Therefore, the sample size is justified by Macfartane (2003) who stated that for a sample size of more than a few thousand, simple random sampling is appropriate. The instrument for the study will be a structured questionnaire titled “Librarian Perception on Using Social Media as a tool for Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State”. The questionnaire is made up of twenty (20) items.

This involved the collection and analyzing data to assess the accuracy of an instrument which will be used to measure and perform the survey. The instruments to be used by the researcher were taken to lecturers in the field of library and information science for proper validation and approval. The data for this study will be collected using questionnaire. The researchers employed the direct delivery technique in the administration of the questionnaire by visiting University of Agriculture Makurdi, Benue State University and University of Mkar, Mkar where they administer the questionnaire to the respondents and allow them time to complete after which the copies were collected back. This is done so as to ensure a high return rate. The data collected will be analysed using descriptive statistics analysis to generate frequencies and percentages to answer the research questions.

Results

Do Librarian uses Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State?

	Items	Yes	No
1	Do librarian normally use social media for disseminating information about coronavirus(COVID19)	200	50
2	Do librarian visit social media network for educational purpose on a daily basis	180	70

3	Social media is effective for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID19)	240	10
4	Do librarian think Doctors should be using social media network in the classroom	205	45
5	Do librarian have social media network for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID19) that are specific to your health	0	250
6	Do your librarian uses social media to facilitate information dissemination	-	250

Table 1. Presents the response to question items on the use of social media in preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID19) tertiary institutions in Benue state. The respondents revealed that social media is being used for circulation of information in the public and also being used for educational purpose at times. However, many agreed that social media is effective for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID19) and it was agreed too that it should be used for prevention. Furthermore, it was revealed that there is no specific social media network for the institutions, hence librarian are not using social media to facilitate information dissemination process in tertiary institutions in Benue state

What are the benefits Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State?

s/no	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision Point
1	Social media usage will facilitate information dissemination process effectively	78	77	75	20	2.85	Accepted
2	Through social media there is easy access to information	74	50	82	44	2.62	Accepted
3	Social media gives room for new discoveries of facts independently by librarian	62	70	47	71	2.49	Rejected
4	Using social media helps librarian to learn on their own for better result	71	62	94	23	2.72	Accepted
5	Social media make librarian to stay in touch with their study	43	52	135	20	2.47	Rejected
6	Overall mean					2.60	

Table2. Presents the frequency and mean response of the respondent benefits Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State Six question items were presented to the respondents three of the question items were accepted based on the 2.50 decision point set in the study. The accepted question items were social media usage will facilitate information dissemination process effectively, there will be easy access to information. The rejected question items include Social media make librarian to stay in touch with their study. The overall mean was 2.60 representing 65.0%, this implies that the use of social media in preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19)has benefits.

What are the factors inhibiting Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State?

s/no	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision point
1	Lack of facilities hinder the use of social media in preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19)	88	47	76	39	2.74	Accepted
2	Poor knowledge of the use of social media affect its usage in preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19)	69	39	48	94	2.33	Rejected
3	Poor internet access hinders the use of social media in preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19)	58	69	63	60	2.50	Accepted
4	Due to misuse of social media many dislike the use of it for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19)	58	69	123		2.74	Accepted
5	Social media usage may bring distraction when used in preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19)	24	82	132	12	2.47	Rejected
6	Poor knowledge on how to manipulate the social media in preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19)	83	82	85		2.99	Accepted
	Overall mean					2.63	

The table 3 presents the frequency and the mean of the respondent’s response on the factors inhibiting Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State tertiary institutions. Six question items were presented to the respondents four of the question items were accepted based on 2.50m decision point set in the study. The accepted question items include lack of facilities hinders the use of social media, poor internet facilities, misuse of the media and poor knowledge on how to manipulate social media in teaching and learning two question items were rejected based which include poor knowledge of the use of social media and possibility of bringing distraction. The overall mean was 2.63 representing 65.8%, this implies that there are factors inhibiting Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State.

What are the challenges pose Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State?

s/n	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision point
1	Inadequate facilities	89	84	54	23	2.96	Accepted
2	Poor technical know how	83	39	57	71	2.54	Accepted
3	Expensive to use	70	37	143		2.71	Accepted
4	Poor knowledge on the use	23	32	165	30	2.19	Rejected
5	Poor power supply	93	66	75	16	2.94	Accepted
6	Attitude towards the usage	74	91	41	44	2.78	Accepted
	Overall mean					2.69	

The table 4. Presents the frequency and the mean of the respondents on the challenges pose Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State. Six question items were presented; five of the question items were rejected based on 2.50 decision point set in the study. The accepted question items are, inadequate facilities, poor technical know-how, expensive to use, poor power supply and attitude towards the usage. The only rejected question item was poor knowledge on the use. The overall mean was 2.69

representing 67.3%. This implies that there are challenges pose Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State.

What are the solutions to the problems mentioned?

s/n	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision point
1	Provision of adequate facilities for the use of social media in prevention process	93	74	83		3.04	Accepted
2	Training on technical knowhow on the use of social media in prevention process	56	83	72	39	2.62	Accepted
3	Affordability of the required materials for use of social media	85	78	102		2.94	Accepted
4	Adequate supply power for effective use of social media in prevention process	58	67	140		2.69	Accepted
5	Proper orientation on the usage of the social media	103	61	92	9	2.97	Accepted
	Overall mean					2.85	

Table 5. Present the frequency and the mean of the respondent's response on the solution to the problems associated with challenges to effective use of social media in a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19). Five question items were presented and all the question items were accepted based on 2.50 decision point. The accepted question items include adequate facilities, knowledge on the usage among others. The overall mean was 2.85, this implies that the listed question items are solution to problems or challenges to effective use of social media in Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State tertiary institutions in Benue state.

Discussion of findings

Findings of the paper show that social media in preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID19) tertiary institutions in Benue state. The respondents revealed that social media is being used for circulation of information in the public and also being used for educational purpose at times. However, many agreed that social media is effective for preventing the spread of coronavirus

(COVID-19) and it was agreed too that it should be used for prevention. Furthermore, it was revealed that there is no specific social media network for the institutions, hence librarian are not using social media to facilitate information dissemination process in tertiary institutions in Benue state

Findings on the benefits of Librarians using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State Six question items were presented to the respondents three of the question items were accepted based on the 2.50 decision point set in the study. The accepted question items were social media usage will facilitate information dissemination process effectively, there will be easy access to information. The rejected question items include Social media make librarian to stay in touch with their study. The overall mean was 2.60 representing 65.0%, this implies that the use of social media in preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) has benefits.

Findings reveal factors inhibiting Librarians using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State tertiary institutions. Six question items were presented to the respondents four of the question items were accepted based on 2.50m decision point set in the study. The accepted question items include lack of facilities hinders the use of social media, poor internet facilities, misuse of the media and poor knowledge on how to manipulate social media in teaching and learning two question items were rejected based which include poor knowledge of the use of social media and possibility of bringing distraction. The overall mean was 2.63 representing 65.8%, this implies that there are factors inhibiting Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State.

Findings also show on the challenges to effective use of social media in tertiary institutions in Benue state. Six question items were presented; five of the question items were rejected based on 2.50 decision point set in the study. The accepted question items are, inadequate facilities, poor technical know-how, expensive to use, poor power supply and attitude towards the usage. The only rejected question item was poor knowledge on the use. The overall mean was 2.69 representing 67.3%. This implies that there are challenges to effective use of social media in teaching and learning in tertiary institutions in Benue state.

Findings also show on the challenges pose Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State. Six question items were presented; five of the question items were rejected based on 2.50 decision point set in the study. The accepted question items are, inadequate facilities, poor technical know-how, expensive to use, poor power supply and attitude towards the usage. The only rejected question item was poor knowledge on the use. The overall mean was 2.69 representing 67.3%. This implies that there are challenges pose Librarian using Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State.

Findings reveal on the solution to the problems associated with challenges to effective use of social media in a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19). Five question items were presented and all the question items were accepted based on 2.50 decision point. The accepted question items include adequate facilities, knowledge on the usage among others. The overall mean was 2.85, this implies that the listed question items are solution to problems or challenges to effective use of social media in Social Media as a tool for preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID 19) in Benue State tertiary institutions in Benue state.

. Findings of the study are similar to Tion, Ilo and Beetseh, (2019), Okike, Terna and Beetseh (2019), and Tor-Akwer (2019).

Conclusion

Social media sites such as Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, whatsapp and twitter have proven time and again that it can go a long way to improve the odds and lot of underprivileged, disadvantaged learners by opening new ways of linking with instructors since social media tools are already available to both parties and most librarian know how to use it or do not need any skills or training to learn to use these tools to collaborate, communicate, interact, share their ideas, problems with their librarian and public. There are many benefits of Social media to education but it cannot be said that this new tools will be panacea to the educational challenges facing developing countries including Benue State, however these new tools can support and complement face to face instructions.

Recommendations

The paper made recommendations such as University management must design time and opportunities for the use of social media activities in campus, Both librarian and public must be open to learning and using new social media approaches that extend and enhance librarian-public interactions, Class size needs to be limited to areas on cable number that will enhance effective use of social media and University management and policy makers must be prepared to allocate more time to supporting social media components. Both instructors and students must be open to learning and using new social media approaches that extend and enhance librarian-public interactions. University management or policy makers should encourage all librarians to use social media for academic purposes.

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