Utilisation of Social Media for Effective Library Services Patronage and Its Impact on Public University Libraries in the South-south, Nigeria

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Abstract

    Utilisation of social media in the 21st century libraries enable libraries to provide attractive library services to achieve the ultimate goal of marketing library and information services and reaching out to users to effectively patronise and use the physical library and its resources. The paper investigated the utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage and its impact on public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria. The paper also determined the types of social media use in public university libraries under study. The survey design of correlational type was adopted. Three state public universities and 45 librarians were totally enumerated. Questionnaire was used to collect data for analysis. The research instrument was validated, to consider its suitability for the study. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance. Significant relationship (r = 0.456) existed between the utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage and its impacts on public university libraries. The findings showed that public university libraries under study underutilised social media with mean scores below 2.50 criterion benchmark. The paper concluded that through the utilisation of social media in library services, public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria could market, advertise their products and services, promote brands of library images, among others. The paper recommended that state governments, university authorities and library management should take drastic steps to tackle the problems of funding, infrastructural facilities, irregular power supply, among others for efficient and high level utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage for adequate teaching and learning in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

Keywords: Utilisation of social media, Effective library services patronage, Impact, Public university libraries, South-south, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

University libraries play important roles in the intellectual and academic development of various categories of users such as students, lecturers, researchers and the communities they serve. The university library in Nigeria is hub around which

academic activities of universities revolved. Libraries are one of the most essential units in universities that established them. The provision of quality services in university libraries is very important because the efficiency and effectiveness of every academic library are not only determined and measured based on completeness and balance collections but also quality of services being rendered. Library service delivery which is the delivering of library information products and services to users in order to satisfy and meet their information needs, also involves the interaction between library staff and users where the provider (library staff) offer quality services which could actually occur either in a traditional or virtual form, and users in turn, find value in the services.

Now, the world is witnessing a revolution as a result of developments in ICTs that has permeated all sectors. Modern day librarianship requires knowledge of ICTs in services delivery to remain relevant. Today, the contemporary practice in university library services is being propelled with the inclusion of ICTs in all aspects of library services. The university libraries in the 21st century focus more on the area of digital, virtual or libraries without borders all of which have transited and transformed the university library environment. A variety of manual method are replaced by computerised system which provides opportunity for online accessibility. The traditional library services delivery and inclusion of information and communication technologies in library services and functions are relevant. For university libraries to measure up to expectations, they must develop strategies to meet the demands of the 21st century users, as well as their means of survival.

Unfortunately, most libraries still operate the traditional system of services delivery without the inclusion of ICTs in their services. These libraries are not computerised, nor do they make moves for transition and transformation accompanied with sophistication in the changing pattern in information needs of users which is growing rapidly. Furthermore, it is however observed that, due to the rising tide of discontent in traditional library services in university libraries where library users get frustrated and spent much time in search of information materials, the users irregularly visit and use the physical library and its resources. They delight in using materials in the Internet that are not evaluated and sieved by professionals. Importantly, twenty-first century librarians are not expected to stay in the library building to promote library services. Librarians are expected to leave their comfort zones and offices to deliver services to users outside the traditional services delivery to meet users where they are, make their presence and that of the library felt by users in the web, keep library's image alive as well as key into the current trend by actively being wherever users are in the Internet.

Services delivery of university libraries in Nigeria can be possible through the utilisation of social media, which is a new service models, methods and technologies that can be adopted to improve library services which the conventional media lack. The common social media platform people share information encompasses: Facebook, Blogs, Wikis, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, RSS, Flickr, SlideShare, LinkedIn, Google Plus (g+), MySpace, WhatsApp, Academia.com, Social Marks, Podcasting, Mash-up, Tag Cloud, Folksonomy, among others. Social media is an offshoot of information and communication technology. Social media is a powerful new form of communication which the world of librarianship is drifting toward this 21st century to promote and market services and different events offered manually by libraries. Social media is a

way for people to communicate and interact online. It is creating more friendly, social, and fun environments for retrieving and sharing information. The utilisation of social media in libraries is very important in advertising, branding and marketing library products and services as well as reaching out to users online.

With the use of social media, university libraries can make a difference by creating a new idea beyond books, that is, ensuring that however and wherever library service is accessed it is clear that the library provides it. By so doing, this will help to overturn some outdated perceptions of library users to persuade them of the value of library and its services in their educational pursuit, as well as enhance the library services patronage by users. Thus bringing back users to regularly visit and use the physical library and its resources. Use of social media tools could provide flexible services platforms to users, as they provide interactive opportunities beyond the conventional platforms for the dissemination and delivery of library materials and events. These tools can connect librarians with users and offer key information about library business, products, services, and upcoming events as well as sending automated messages to users whenever a new product or services is launched. It can be used for communication and to build strong relationships with library users for different purposes.

Furthermore, social media tools would make it easier for library users to remotely access library collections, individually and as group for independent as well as group learning. It therefore goes a long way towards developing a dynamic and interactive library, brings visibility to the library, its collections, and enhancement of it services and their reach to users, along with these benefits, it also brings responsibilities too. The adoption and use of social media tools in library services delivery could help mitigate users' stress, frustration, suffering, and spending of much time in search of information materials due to the old library traditional system operations. But, these services demand commitment, awareness and understanding of current technological trends, regular monitoring of user needs and expectations and marketing of the services and products

Social media is important in university libraries in Nigeria, to create relationships with users on social media, understand users' needs for libraries to partake in users' conversation and serve them better. Social media tools can be used by university libraries to interact and serve faculty member staff and students and create awareness of importance of libraries, events, new arrivals, and so on. With social media, librarians and users can stay in touch even outside the library period, also engaged with users directly by allowing them to send them messages, and their questions can be answered quickly. It also allows library users to interact with librarians and access a variety of library collections/materials in real-time. It is better for libraries to be part of the conversation in delivering library services. Where this is lacking in Nigerian university libraries, it may impact negatively on university libraries. This deserves serious attention.

Nevertheless, despite the importance of social media and efforts made to adopt the technologies for improved library services as reported in the literature, little success has been recorded. Consequently, this study was carried out to investigate the utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage and its impact on public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria. The study would help to add to the scarce literature in library science from Nigeria, therefore, bridging the gap in

literature on utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage and its impact on public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

The researcher's observation and preliminary investigation of some public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria revealed that most libraries are yet to utilise social media in their services. These, probably, could have negative impact on the library services patronage of public university. However, evidence also from studies have shown that despite the use and benefits derive from social media by Nigerians, generally, and particularly, those in university libraries, these have not been well documented. Studies have further shown that no study has been carried out in relationship to the utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage and its impact on public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that the study investigated the utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage and its impact on public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria.

Research objectives

The objectives were to:
1. ascertain the types of social media use in public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria; and
2. determine the relationship between the utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage and its impact on public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria.

Research questions
1. What are the types of social media use in public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria?

Hypothesis
1. There is no significant relationship between utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage and its impact on public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are changes in the 21st Century libraries. The world at present has turned to Information Age. With advances in technologies, more information becomes available through a wide range of media. Library users now rely heavily on information resources in various formats including prints and electronics, especially electronic resources that are accessible via the Internet. Libraries now utilise social media in their services (Ezeani & Igwesi, 2012; Mabawonku, 2017; Eyo, 2017). According to Mabawonku (2017), social media differ from traditional media in terms of quality, reach, frequency, usability, immediacy and permanence. According to Solis (2011), the use of social media to deliver library services enables librarians can keep in touch with hundreds of widely dispersed people. Furthermore, the simple act of having conversations and creating relationships with patrons is immensely useful.

Through conversions on social media, libraries can gain insights into what their users want and need and ultimately understand their users better. Oriedi (2011) stated that social media opens up a whole new world of communication where the user is the focus. Therefore, librarians are expected to take full advantages of social media in delivering library and information services to satisfactorily meet the needs of the 21st Century information users. This corroborates The European Union (2012) statement that the Internet has become a primary source of information for today's society through an increase in geographical scope thus increasing the number of participants in activities. In fact, the use of social media in library activities allowed library and users to have direct and intimate relationship, thereby promoting library activities.

However, libraries in developed and developing countries are using social media to market their services, to connect with library users and to make library programmes and services accessible. Khan and Bhatti (2012) study showed respondents agreement that social media is an important tool for marketing and promoting library products and services among online information users, build discussion groups and collaborative work. Canty (2013) pointed out that multifaceted approach has been adopted by libraries in connection to the use of social media, noting that libraries do not have generally stipulated social media that should be used by all libraries, but each library adopts those suitable for her library services. Braziel (2009) stated that library uses Blogs, Flickr, YouTube, Social Networking, iTunes and Twitter for its different services. Presentations and talks organised on different topics by libraries are disseminated via podcasts (NLA, 2010).

Kemrajh (2013) revealed some social media tools used in library services to include Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, LinkedIn, Foursquare, Tumblr, Vimeo, Pinterest, Wikipedia, Instagram, Sound cloud, among others. In the same vein, Mutula (2011) study found that the most popular social media in Kenya's libraries is Facebook, followed by Twitter, RSS, SlideShare, YouTube, Flickr and blogs in that order. Abubakar (2011) affirmed the social media that could be used in libraries to include: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube for video sharing, Podcast for audio sharing, mobile sites (2go), flicker for image or picture sharing, among others that have the capacity of boosting participation because of their open, conventional nature, connectedness and textual and audio-visual characteristic appeals. Santosh (2016) study of new media technologies in selected Indian Universities showed Facebook to be the most used technology attracting 80.26%, Wikipedia attracted 67.11%, blogs attracted 59.21%, while YouTube attracted 55.26% of the respondents.

Mwantimwa and Nkhoma-Wamunza (2016) study on adoption and applying new media technologies in selected academic libraries in Tanzania revealed that, 33 (82.5) respondents use new media technologies. In the same vein, 16 (40%) agreed that they used it for library operations, while 5 (26.3%) do not use it. Hendrix and Zafron (2009) found the main purpose of using Facebook in libraries to include: to market the library, push out announcements to library users, for promotional purpose, to have a presence in the social network, by posting photos and providing chat reference service. Some purposes for using social media in libraries as observed by Canty (2013) include library marketing and reference services. O'Shea (2008) reported in Ezeani and Igwesi (2012), asserted that academic libraries are using RSS Feeds for syndicating blog content (on web sites – including Facebook, into online courseware, and so on), for

creating OPML packages for library patrons, for subject guides, for RSS feeds from the ILS, for new books feeds, search feeds, feeds of checked-out books and holds.

On the contrary, with the importance of social media in every activity, these tools are not adequately and effectively used in libraries. A study by Adamu, Babalola and Saka (2018) reported that new media were underutilised in their studied university libraries. However, their study also revealed a significant positive relationship between utilisation of new media and information service delivery. However, utilisation of social media for effective library services delivery in public university libraries in Nigeria is anchored on funding, regular power supply, infrastructure, Internet connectivity, knowledge on how to use social media to promote services, adequate training opportunities to use social media, awareness of use of social media in library services, sufficient library personnel, among others (Eyo, 2017). The researcher also opined that, despite the above challenges, Nigerian libraries and their librarians should seriously embrace social media tools to market their products and services, showing the relevance and importance of libraries in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria in this 21st century. Thus helping to bring back library users who had left the library to come back and patronage the library for their learning.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for the study was the survey design of correlational type. The study population consisted of forty-five (45) librarians working in 3 state public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria. The state public university libraries are: Akwa Ibom State University library, Ikot Akpaden, Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH) library, Calabar and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education library, Port Harcourt. A total enumeration was adopted as sample technique. A questionnaire was used to collect data for analysis. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by involving librarians who were not included in the population of the study. A pre-test was conducted to ascertain the content validity. The research instrument was validated and considered reliable and suitable for the study. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Questionnaire distribution and response rate

S/N	Name of institution	No. of questionnaire administered	No. of questionnaire returned	Response rate (%)
1	Akwa Ibom State University, Ikot-Akpaden, Mkpat Enin LGA	13	7	25
2	Cross River University of Technology, Calabar	22	15	53.5
3	Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port-Harcourt	10	6	21.4
		45	28	62.2%

N = 28 (62.2%)

Table 1 showed that out of 45 questionnaires distributed to the respondents, only 28 usable questionnaires were completed and returned. This accounted for 62.2%.

Table 2: Types of social media use in public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria

S/N	Types of social media	HU 4	U 3	LU 2	NU 1	X	SD
1	Facebook	5 (17.9%)	7 (25%)	7 (25%)	9 (32.1%)	2.43	1.14
2	Twitter	5 (17.9%)	6 (21.4%)	7 (25%)	10 (35.7%)	2.32	1.06
3	YouTube	4 (14.3%)	3 (10.7%)	12 (42.9%)	9 (32.1%)	2.07	1.02
4	Flickr	2 (7.1%)	4 (14.3%)	8 (28.5%)	14 (50%)	2.00	0.86
5	WhatsApp	1 (3.6%)	4 (14.3%)	10 (35.7%)	13 (46.4%)	1.86	0.80
6	LinkedIn	2 (7.1%)	5 (17.9%)	9 (32.1%)	12 (42.9%)	2.00	0.90
7	Google+	1 (3.6%)	2 (7.1%)	17 (60.7%)	8 (28.5%)	1.85	0.76
8	Blogs	1 (3.6%)	3 (10.7%)	9 (32.1%)	15 (53.6%)	1.85	0.76
9	RSS feeds	5 (17.9%)	6 (21.4%)	10 (35.7%)	7 (25%)	2.32	1.06
10	SlideShare	2 (7.1%)	3 (10.7%)	6 (21,4%)	17 (60.7%)	2.07	0.86
	Weighted mean				2.50		

HU = High Usage; U = Usage; LU = Low Usage; NU = No Usage

The study investigated the types of social media use in library services in public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria as presented in Table 2. The findings from table 2 revealed that all the ten (10) types of social media listed, Facebook ($\bar{X}$ = 2.43), Twitter ($\bar{X}$ = 2.32), YouTube ($\bar{X}$ = 2.07), Flickr ($\bar{X}$ = 2.00), WhatsApp ($\bar{X}$ = 1.86), LinkedIn ($\bar{X}$ = 2.00), Google+ ($\bar{X}$ = 1.85), Blogs ($\bar{X}$ = 1.85), RSS feeds ($\bar{X}$ = 2.32) and SlideShare ($\bar{X}$ = 2.07) had mean ($\bar{X}$) score less than 2.50 criterion benchmark which is below average. It can therefore be inferred that social media were underutilise for the provision of library services to users in public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria.

TEST OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage and its impact on public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria

Table 3: Relationship between the utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage and its impact on public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria

		Utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage	Impact on public university libraries
Utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage	Pearson Correlation	1	0.456*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.015
	N	28	28

Impact on public university libraries	Pearson Correlation	0.456*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.015	
	N	28	28

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The result in Table 3 shows that the critical value (r-value) (r = 0.456) is greater than p-value (0.015), hence, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This implied that there was a significant relationship between the utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage and its impact on public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria. This, therefore, showed that social media is a veritable tool to market and promote library products and services in public university libraries. The utilisation of social media in libraries also enhance the provision and delivery of library services to users in public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

The findings on the types of social media use in libraries in public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria revealed that all the ten (10) types of social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Google$^+$, Blogs, RSS feeds and SlideShare) listed had mean ($\bar{x}$) score less than 2.50 the criterion benchmark which is below average. Therefore, the participants' responses attracted a high no usage of the ten types of social media in the provision and marketing of library services to users in the libraries under study. This is in line with the report on Adamu, Babalola and Saka (2018) study that new media were underutilised in their studied university libraries. Similarly, Mwantimwa and Nkhoma-Wamunza (2016) study on adoption and application of new media revealed respondents' agreement that they do not use it.

The finding further established a significant relationship between utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage and its impact on public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria. The finding is in line with Adamu, Babalola and Saka (2018) report that positive relationship existed between utilisation of new media and information service delivery.

CONCLUSION

The paper concluded that the utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage is very important to market, advertise library products and services by alerting their users of new arrivals, events, promoting brands of library images, among others, to reach out to users who are scattered everywhere in the Internet and to provide and deliver attractive services bringing back users who had left public university libraries to patronise the physical libraries and their resources, as opposed to a manual search which is slow, frustrating and tedious. This, however, is anchored on improved funding, constant power supply, Internet connectivity, adequate personnel with ICT/technical skills, infrastructure, among others.

The study also established a significant relationship between utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage and its impact on public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria. Therefore, librarians in public university libraries cannot afford to ignore this technology. It is, therefore, inevitable that librarians need to learn the use of these tools to keep abreast with the ever growing sophisticated

library users in public university libraries for the progress of the library and the profession. The librarians, therefore, need to understand what needs to be done and how it should be done. However, when done correctly and consistently, social media can be a truly powerful tool for cultivating a community. Furthermore, library users will find libraries which have not embraced social media in the near future as insensitive, archaic and largely unusable. If the library ever ceases to be growing organism, then it really will become extinct. It is therefore important that librarians take an active role in utilising social media in library services in Nigeria public university libraries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Significantly, the utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage is very important in libraries to deliver and market library products and services. This, however, is anchored on improved funding, constant power supply, Internet connectivity, adequate personnel with ICT/technical skills, infrastructure, among others. Specifically, the present level of funding (budgetary allocation), infrastructural facilities, irregular power supply and investment in staff training and re-training, among others should be improved to encourage efficient and high level of utilisation of social media for effective library services patronage in public university in the South-south, Nigeria. Therefore, stakeholders (state governments, university authorities and library management) must take drastic steps to tackle these problems of underutilisation of social media in library services in public universities in South-south, Nigeria.

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