

Use of Social Media for Service Delivery by Library Staff in Academic Libraries in Imo State: A Case of Federal University of Technology, Owerri

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on use of social media for service delivery by library staff in academic libraries in Imo State with a focus on Federal University of Technology, Owerri. It was guided by five objectives of the study. The survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study is 134 library staff comprising 46 librarians and 88 library officers working in the academic library studied. Total enumeration sampling technique was used to cover all 134 library staff as sample for the study. An instrument titled 'Use of Social Media for Service Delivery by Library Staff Scale (USMSDLSS)' was used for data collection and was rated using the four-point scale. Out of the 134 copies of instrument distributed, 122 copies were returned showing 91% return rate. Data generated from the study were analyzed using mean (x) scores. The findings of the study revealed among others that the types of social media used by library staff for service delivery are Facebook, WhatsApp and Blog and library staff use social media for service delivery to a low extent. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that academic library management should incorporate more social media platforms for service delivery by library staff to enable the provision of round the clock library services to library users.

KEYWORDS: Academic libraries, Library Staff, Service Delivery, Social Media and Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries are found in tertiary institutions to support teaching, research and learning needs of students, teaching and non-teaching staff of their parent institutions. Uwandu (2020) asserts that academic libraries are libraries attached to institutions of higher learning such as universities, colleges of education, polytechnics and colleges of technology that deal with the provision of information resources for research, learning and teaching. Academic libraries are well-stocked with collections to support the objectives of its establishment which is learning,

teaching and research. They have been making significant contributions to knowledge generation and provision geared towards meeting the needs of students, staff and immediate community of their parent institutions. The extent to which academic libraries can render effective services to meet the needs of students, staff and immediate community of their parent institutions depend on the type and adequacy of the library staff.

Library staff play a very vital role in the achievement of the objectives of the library. No library can provide effective services without efficient and dynamic personnel. This implies that the effectiveness of every library depends on the performance of the library personnel. For smooth running of the library, library staff render services such as circulation services, reprographic services, inter-loan library services, user education/ orientation services, reference services, selective dissemination of information, current awareness services, referral services, abstracting and indexing services, among others. The quality of the library personnel play a major role in the quality of services rendered. This is why Okorie and Okere (2017) reiterate that the academic library must be staffed with a mix of relevant professional, para-professional and support staff to ensure qualitative service delivery.

Service delivery is the most important function of any academic library. It is an act of rendering services to users of the library. These services should be rendered without reservations in order to achieve the academic library objectives of information dissemination. Unfortunately, services delivered in some academic libraries are done manually due to traditional means of storing and retrieving information. The cumbersome nature of the manual means of delivering services and changing needs of users of the academic libraries together with the introduction of Information and Communication Technologies in library operations prompted the need for libraries to apply new technologies to improve their service delivery. Effective service delivery in academic library is said to have occurred when the delivered library services match and exceed the expectation of the user, influenced by his information needs (Alex-Nmecha, 2018). In order to remain relevant and meet up with the changing needs and expectations of users in this technological era, academic libraries are integrating new technologies such as social media for effective service delivery.

Social media is becoming an indispensable tool used in libraries for improving services. Awurdi (2019) submits that social media has gradually crept into the library profession and has become a growing tool that is being used to communicate with more potential library users; extending and offering better services to users. In this technological era, it is imperative to note that most academic libraries use social media to maintain their relevance as it enables them share new ideas, knowledge, information, interact with their users and create awareness of new services to meet up with the information needs of their users. Within seconds, library staff can retrieve information, disseminate information to users of the library and also connect with coworkers without much delay. With the use of social media in academic libraries, it can be said that library staff have found an easy way to deliver their services to users of the library. It is a fact that most library staff use social media for service delivery in academic libraries. However, the extent of social media use by the library staff of the institution studied have not been ascertained. Hence this study was carried out to examine use of social media for service delivery by library staff in academic libraries in Imo State with particular reference to Federal University of Technology, Owerri.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following specific objectives guided the study:

- ✓ To identify the types of social media used by library staff for service delivery in the library studied.
- ✓ To determine the extent of use of social media by library staff for service delivery in the library studied.
- ✓ To investigate services library staff deliver using social media in the library studied.
- ✓ To ascertain the constraints to effective use of social media for service delivery by library staff in the library studied.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In our society today, social media has become a household name and it seems to be what people cannot do without because it facilitates effectiveness in information sharing. It has provided different avenue to interact with people who may not be in the same location. Likewise in libraries, social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Telegram, YouTube and Blog are used to re-establish connections and interact with users of the library who have embraced the internet irrespective of their geographical location. This implies that with social media, library services can be offered to the users of the library even when they are not physically present in the library. This is why Oyeniran and Olajide (2019) observed that social media's presence is almost everywhere and the vision of the library within the last few years has been that library services should go to users not necessarily that users should come physically to the library. Libraries desiring to connect constantly with their clients, increase users' satisfaction and this is done through the promotion and presence of social media platforms like YouTube, Blog, etc. for service delivery (Omini & Osuolake, 2019). In a study carried out by Bakare, Yacob and Umar (2018), one of the findings revealed that librarians deliver library services using social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Blog and WhatsApp. Adewojo and Mayowa-Adebara (2016) revealed that library staff mostly use WhatsApp and Facebook daily in rendering services to users. Omini and Osuolale (2019) found out that academic libraries mostly use Facebook and blog to promote library resources and services.

The library is a growing organism as such library staff should be innovative and creative to make use of social media tools available to them for effective service delivery. Social media usage by library staff is very important to keep the library staff abreast with latest news and trends in their profession. Findings of Adewoyin, Onuoha and Ikonne (2017) pointed out that the most used social media tool in libraries was Facebook and library staff used it on a daily basis. Okoroma (2018) revealed that although library staff mostly use Facebook on a daily basis for reference services but the usage was low. In a study carried out in Australia and New Zealand, Linh as cited in Bakare (2018) analyzed the content of 47 university library websites and found that although two-thirds of libraries used social media technologies, the general indexes of their use were low. Similarly, a study by Danbaki, Mohammed, Gado and Ikegwuro (2020) revealed that to a very small extent social media is being utilized by librarians in Nigeria tertiary institution libraries with Facebook being the most used.

Service delivery is fundamental to libraries. Agoh and Omekwu (2021) described library and information service delivery as library processes and activities that are deployed by libraries to deliver information services and resources to library users, with the aim of enhancing the activities and productivity of library users. It is not surprising that library staff in academic libraries deliver library and information services using social media to help

meet the information needs of library users. Oyeniran and Olajide (2019) discovered that reference services, marketing of information produce and services, strategic dissemination of information, exhibition and display of new arrivals, display of reading lists, online registration of users, among others are various services rendered via social media in the library. Bakare (2018) citing Mahmood and Richardson concluded that academic libraries use Social Networking Sites (SNS) for sharing news, pictures, video clips and marketing their services. Obi, Okore and Kanu (2019) pointed out that answering reference questions, user education, current awareness services, alert users due, display and exhibition, document delivery services and circulation services are library services rendered with social media.

There are some challenges impeding proper application of social media by library staff for service delivery in academic libraries. Emmanuel and Osulale (2019) identified high cost of internet connectivity, lack of interest in utilizing internet services, low patronage of internet service, and paucity of well-trained library staff on utilization of social media platforms as constraints to effective use of social media in tertiary institutions. They also added that poor attitude towards social media platforms, low bandwidth and constant epileptic power supply in accessing internet connectivity are among the constraints. Ezeani and Igwesi as cited in John, Egbeyemi and Oniyide (2020) noted that issues bordering on apathy, lack of awareness, insufficient bandwidth, phobia and desire to embrace this new technology inhibit use of social networking in most libraries especially in developing countries. Furthermore, Danbaki, Mohammed, Gado and Ikegwuro (2020) maintained that lack of finance, limited bandwidth, lack of proper training of library staff in the area of using social media, low level of technology penetration, unreliable power supply and poor network connectivity are challenges facing social media use by Nigerian tertiary institution libraries. Lack of awareness, bandwidth problem, technophobia, lack of maintenance culture, unreliable power supply, lack of staff training and copyright issue are challenges librarians face in using social media (Oyeniran & Olajide, 2019). These challenges hinder proper utilization of social media in service delivery in libraries.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study is 134 library staff comprising 46 librarians and 88 library officers working in the academic library studied. Total enumeration sampling technique was used to cover all 134 library staff as sample for the study. An instrument titled ‘Use of Social Media for Service Delivery by Library Staff Scale (USMSDLSS)’ was used for data collection and was rated using the four-point scale. Out of the 134 copies of instrument distributed, 122 copies were returned showing 91% return rate. Data generated from the study were analyzed using mean (x) scores. Items with values of 2.50 and above respectively were positively interpreted, while items with values below 2.50 were negatively interpreted. The benchmark for rating is Strongly Agree (SA)/Very High Extent (VHE) = 3.50 – 4.0, Agree (A)/High Extent (HE) = 2.50 – 3.49, Disagree (D)/Low Extent (LE) = 1.5 – 2.49, and Strongly Disagree (SD)/Very Low Extent (VLE) = 0 – 1.49.

DATA ANALYSES, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Types of Social Media used by Library Staff for Service Delivery in the Library Studied.

S/N	Social Media	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remarks
1.	Facebook	86	36	-	-	3.62	SA

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2.	WhatsApp	63	47	12	-	3.42	A
3.	Twitter	45	59	12	6	2.05	D
4.	Blog	41	63	9	9	3.11	A
5.	YouTube	15	33	50	24	2.32	D
6.	Telegram	6	39	42	35	2.13	D
7.	LinkedIn	12	27	65	18	2.27	D
8.	Wikis	15	24	56	27	2.22	D
9.	Library Thing	21	30	41	30	2.34	D
Grand Mean						2.61	A

In Table 1, the respondents strongly agree that Facebook (3.62) is among the types of social media used by library staff for service delivery. They also agree that WhatsApp (3.42) and Blog (3.11) are among the types of social media used by library staff for service delivery. However, they disagree that Twitter (2.05), YouTube (2.32), Telegram (2.13), LinkedIn (2.27), Wikis (2.22) and Library Thing (2.34) are not among the types of social media used by library staff for service delivery in the library studied. The grand mean shows that the respondents agree that social media is used by library staff for service delivery in the library studied. Most of the items the respondents agreed with as the types of social media used by library staff for service delivery are in tandem with the ideas of Adewojo and Mayowa-Adebara (2016), Bakare, Yacob and Umar (2018) and Omini and Osulale (2019).

Table 2: Extent Library Staff use Social Media for Service Delivery in the Library Studied.

S/N	Social Media	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Remarks
1.	Facebook	10	19	76	17	2.18	LE
2.	WhatsApp	18	20	58	26	2.25	LE
3.	Twitter	4	8	31	79	1.48	VLE
4.	Blog	11	24	67	20	2.21	LE
5.	YouTube	5	6	27	84	1.44	VLE
6.	Telegram	12	26	57	27	2.19	LE
7.	LinkedIn	7	4	24	87	1.43	VLE
8.	Wikis	3	30	53	36	1.75	LE
9.	Library Thing	10	8	26	78	1.60	LE
Grand Mean						1.84	LE

The result of the analysis in Table 2 shows that the social media used to a low extent are Facebook, WhatsApp, Blog, Telegram, Wikis and Library Thing with mean scores of 2.18, 2.25, 2.21, 2.19, 1.75 and 1.60 respectively. Others such as Twitter (1.48), YouTube (1.44) and LinkedIn (1.43) are used to a very low extent. Generally, library staff use social media for service delivery to a low extent in the library studied as shown in the grand mean which is 1.84. This finding is in consonance with that of Okoroma's (2018) result which revealed that although library staff mostly use Facebook on a daily basis for reference services but the usage was low. Similarly, the finding is in agreement with that of Linh as cited in Bakare (2018) who analyzed the content of 47 university library websites and found out that although two-thirds of libraries used social media technologies, the general indexes of their use were

low. On the contrary, the finding is not in agreement with Danbaki, Mohammed, Gado and Ikegwuro's (2020) findings which revealed that to a very small extent social media is been utilized by librarians in Nigeria tertiary institution libraries with Facebook been the most used.

Table 3: Services Delivered by Library Staff using Social Media in the Library Studied.

S/N	Services	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remarks
1.	Reference services	62	48	3	8	3.36	A
2.	Marketing of information products and services	60	49	9	4	3.35	A
3.	Selective dissemination of information	44	69	6	3	3.26	A
4.	User education	39	57	15	3	3.14	A
5.	Online registration of users	10	16	70	26	2.08	A
6.	Document delivery services	38	33	42	9	2.82	A
7.	Current awareness services	36	67	16	3	3.11	A
8.	Circulation services	45	50	24	3	3.12	A
9.	Exhibition and display	27	65	21	9	2.90	A
10.	Sharing of news, pictures and videos	36	68	9	9	3.07	A
11.	Inter-loan library services	16	59	32	15	2.62	A
Grand Mean						2.97	A

In Table 3, it is discovered that all the respondents agree to all the items as the services delivered by library staff using social media in the library studied with grand mean of 2.97. Reference services ranked first with 3.36 mean score, followed by marketing of information products and services (3.35), selective dissemination of information (3.26), user education (3.14), circulation services (3.12), current awareness services (3.11), sharing of news, pictures and videos (3.07), exhibition and display (2.90), document delivery services (2.82) inter-loan library services (2.62) and online registration of users (2.08) mean scores. The finding of this study corroborates that of Bakare (2018) citing Mahmood and Richardson, Oyeniran and Olajide (2019) and Obi, Okore and Kanu (2019) who identified the services delivered by library staff using social media as reference services, marketing of information produce and services, strategic dissemination of information, exhibition and display of new arrivals, display of reading lists, online registration of users, sharing news, pictures and video clips, user education, current awareness services, alert users due, display and exhibition, document delivery services and circulation services.

Table 4: Constraints to Effective Use of Social Media for Service Delivery by Library Staff in the Library Studied.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1.	Inadequate finance	63	36	6	17	3.19	A
2.	Unreliable power supply	84	30	6	2	3.61	SA
3.	Limited bandwidth	57	54	3	8	3.31	A
4.	Poor network connectivity	63	36	10	13	3.22	A
5.	Technophobia	12	63	27	20	2.55	A
6.	Lack of staff training in the area of social media	18	60	27	17	2.65	A

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7.	Lack of maintenance culture	27	54	27	14	2.77	A
Grand Mean						3.04	A

The result of the analysis in Table 4 shows that the respondents strongly agree to unreliable power supply as one of the constraints to effective use of social media for service delivery by library staff in the library studied with mean score of 3.61. They also agree to the other constraints such as inadequate finance (3.19), limited bandwidth (3.31), poor network connectivity (3.22), technophobia (2.55), lack of staff training in the area of social media (2.65) and lack of maintenance culture (2.77). The grand mean of 3.04 indicates that there are constraints to effective use of social media for service delivery by library staff in the library studied. This finding affirms with the findings of Emmanuel and Osuolale (2019), Oyeniran and Olajide (2019), Ezeani and Igwesi as cited in John, Egbeyemi and Oniyide (2020) and Danbaki, Mohammed, Gado and Ikegwuro (2020).

CONCLUSION

Social media is very important in academic libraries as it will enable library staff to be more engaged with library users online. Based on the findings of the study, Facebook, WhatsApp and Blog are the types of social media used by library staff for service delivery. There is need for academic library management to integrate other social media tools in the library for effective service delivery. Social media can be used for rendering services such as: reference services, marketing of information products and services, selective dissemination of information, user education, online registration of users, document delivery services among others. However, irrespective of the benefits of social media, there are constraints to effective use of social media by library staff in the library. These constraints hinder academic libraries from rendering round the clock library services to the ever growing library users.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommend that:

- Academic library management should incorporate more social media platforms for service delivery by library staff to enable round the clock library services to library users.
- Efforts should be made by academic library management to formulate viable social media policies in the library to enable library staff to fully utilize social media for effective service delivery.
- Seminars and workshops should be organized for library staff by academic library management on issues bordering on social media skills so as to ensure more services delivered by library staff using social media.
- Government and academic institution management should allocate reasonable fund in their annual budget to improve the use of social media for service delivery in the library. Academic library management should make efforts to provide regular and uninterrupted power supply in the library to ensure full integration of social media for service delivery.

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