
Utilization of Social Media Platforms to Enhance Library Service Delivery during Covid 19 Era in Rivers State Universities

Prof. Nonyelum P. Okpokwasili, Dr. Lasbery Adindu

Department of Library and Information Science, Rivers State University, Rivers State, Nigeria

Abstract: The study examined utilization of social media platforms to enhance library service delivery during covid 19 era in Rivers State Universities. The study adopted the descriptive research survey design. Three research questions were answered to guide the study. The population of the study was all the Librarians in Rivers State universities. Due to the small population size of the study, there was no sample and sampling technique. Data for the study was collected through a self-structured questionnaire tagged “Social Media Platforms Utilization Questionnaire (SMPUQ)” which was designed in modified four-point rating scale. The test-retest method was used to test for the reliability of the instrument. The data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) coefficient which yielded a reliability value of 0.84. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the social media platforms were not used by librarians for service delivery. However, the study found that utilization of social media platforms by librarians are marred with challenges. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that the library management should provide opportunities for training and retraining of librarians on social media skills and emerging technologies. The school management should also provide adequate internet facilities and improve on electricity supply so that the library staff can enjoy more access to the internet in order to provide effective and efficient services to their users.

Keywords: Utilization Social Media Platforms Library Service and Covid 19.

Introduction

Library is a special place where information is sought for the purpose of enriching knowledge through thorough and qualitative research among lecturers, students and other researchers. Library could be found in an institution or outside the institution. Irrespective of its location, the central and primary reason of the library is for knowledge enrichment and this make the library to offer different and diverse services to its users which include lending services, referral services, reference services, indexing and abstracting services among others.

The university libraries perform an essential role in disseminating information to support teaching, learning and research activities of staff and students. With the advent of the internet, libraries are facing competition from other sources of information. Library user's expectations about library services are changing and they expect so much more from the libraries as well; they want immediate access to the information they need and in the format that best fits how they need to use it (Fought, Gahn, & Mills 2014). In this competitive world, university libraries cannot afford to become complacent. If the libraries must stay relevant and continue to provide essential services to students and staff, they need to better communicate the value they add to their users and show how they contribute to the objectives of their institutions. University libraries must adjust to the new paradigm shifts as they strive

for survival and sustained relevance especially in the era of covid 19 pandemic (Iwu-James, Haliso & Ifijeh, 2020).

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has considerably transformed the mode of operation of academic libraries globally. With social distancing, lockdowns and quarantining now part of the new normal, academic libraries are now operating on a largely digital and therefore remote basis. Owing to this paradigm shift in the library landscape, academic library services in Rivers State universities are increasingly incorporating social media for enhanced service delivery. Social media according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) refers to a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. They include a variety of applications, including collaborative projects, content communities, and micro-blogs/blogs. Twitter; social networking sites and virtual worlds.

Adigun, Adegboire and Amuda (2015) believe social media is a term that encompasses all Web 2.0 and social networking tools that enable content creation, sharing, discovering and exchange of user-generated content, with the main focus on their participatory nature. Bradley (2015), posits that as social media increasingly becomes a strategic resource for university education, its adoption and use is no longer a luxury, but a necessity for academic libraries. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) believe that since the inception of social media technology, many corporations and institutions have adopted and applied it successfully, displaying the power of these applications to lead to remarkable outcomes. In this changing library landscape, using social media in the library effectively enables librarians to connect with users in a space that they already occupy, while bringing added value to existing activities.

Social media platforms can be used by libraries to post insights into specific materials and collections to educate and well as promote resources and services available in the library. This can increase the value of the library, enlighten users on new stocks and changes the perceptions of users about the library (Omini & Ayanlade, 2019). It is also a useful platform for inviting reviews from user group and using the feedback for collection development. It allows patrons to promote program and events of the library by rating, reviewing and sharing with their friends and neighbours. Social media platforms can also extend the library's offering by sharing resources, highlighting upcoming events and providing advice on examination, stress management and employability. It also enables the libraries to stay connected with their users and the rest of the world by creating a collection of the university latest news, research developments and events. University libraries can use the social media platform for effective customer service by implementing an 'ask the librarian' initiative where students can live chat with a librarian who can answer their queries as well as networking with other libraries for this purpose. Online orientation and user training programs can be promoted through these platforms.

Social media enable libraries to gain a broad reach in the digital world – even beyond their usual user communities. This is because social media affords the library the opportunity to connect with users in a space they already occupy and bring value addition to existing activities. Events are planned and promoted; discussion groups are formed; products are advertised, sold and reviewed; our own cognitive biases are reinforced as we read and share news and information within our filter bubbles of likeminded friends. Therefore, how can academic libraries make the best use of these tools; while avoiding their downsides in this era of COVID-19 pandemic? Thus, as social media tools such Facebook, Blogging, WhatsApp, Twitter and others permeate all fabrics of human life, many sections of society including libraries have moved into cyberspace.

Statement of the Problem

The advent of the internet has brought about the use of different social media platforms in delivery and marketing of library services. University libraries in the world today especially in the face of corona virus pandemic have long adopted the use of this technology to provide the much-needed services in order to maintain their relevance. Therefore, if university libraries in Rivers State must maintain their relevance in this 21st century, they must adapt to this changing environment by incorporating different social media platforms in order to promote their service delivery to their users. With the use of social media, there are more prospects of getting in touch with the library community and users so as to give them a chance to interact with the library. Hence, this study seeks to examine the utilization of social media platforms to enhance library service performance during covid 19 era in Rivers State Universities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the utilization of social media platforms to enhance library service performance during covid 19 era in Rivers State Universities. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the social media tools used by library personnel.
2. examine the library services offered/provided using social media by library personnel.
3. ascertain the challenges to the effective use of social media among library personnel.

Research Question

The following questions were answered to guide the study.

1. What are the social media platforms used by library personnel in Rivers State universities?
2. How are social media platforms used by library personnel for service delivery enhancement in Rivers State universities?
3. What are the challenges facing utilization of social media platforms in service delivery by library personnel in Rivers State universities?

Literature Review

A number of studies have been conducted on the adoption and use of social media for service delivery in academic libraries. Most of the studies have shown that academic libraries globally are increasingly adopting a multiplicity of social media apps to design services that allow them to enhance their communication, interaction and collaboration as acknowledged by (Tripathi & Kumar, 2010; Onuoha, 2013). Social media platforms have become an increasingly familiar tool employed by academic libraries to market their resources and services to current and prospective patrons (Collins & Quan-Haase, 2012). Social media are internet-based platforms which enable people to generate, distribute or exchange information in different forms such as text, images, audio and videos. Bashorun et al., (2018) described social media as a communication forum that allows users to electronically disseminate information and share knowledge with each other. Social media involves the use of network applications to convert one-way communication into an interactive online conversation between two or more people (Dixon, 2012). This therefore means that social media is an instrument that help people to communicate with one another regardless of time and location.

Qualman (2012), states that as a platform which engages millions of users in cyberspace, allowing rapid information flow in various forms and directions, social media can be powerful information dissemination tools and offer a way for academic libraries to promote their activities, resources and services while offering the opportunity to engage with patrons

innovatively. social media can also serve as an avenue to develop a closer relationship between libraries and their clientele as it facilitates a two-way communication between two or more parties (Taylor & Francis, 2014).

Social media use in university libraries is vital as it will help the library staff keep themselves abreast of new advancements in their career and further helps to provide services that will meet the varying needs of their patrons (Adewojo & Adebara, 2016). According to Aras (2014), the objectives of university libraries in using social media are: to promote library services, to provide better access to information, to be where users are, to get feedback from users and to highlight specific features of the library. Promoting library services with social media helps libraries to not only advocate the library but also brings library users to become library advocates. Social media helps in interacting with the library communities and make information available to them in a very accessible way.

Khan and Bhatti (2012) investigated the librarian's attitudes towards the usefulness of social media in marketing of library in Pakistan. The study found that social media is integral to market library services and products among online users; it captures potential users of library and it offers various benefits to libraries and user communities. The study recommends that online news groups/forums, video sharing (YouTube), Social Networking (Facebook, MySpace), Wikis, professional networking and Blogging are good venues for marketing libraries' different services. These tools are used to spread news and service alerts, to provide quick updates to online users and to publish library news and press releases among online users. Collins and Quan-Haase (2012) investigated the adoption and usage patterns of social media tools by academic libraries in Canada. The focus was on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr as these were seen as the most common social media tools in Canada. The study showed that Twitter was the most used social media tool among the academic libraries and was followed by Facebook. YouTube was the least used. Abdulaziz et al., (2010) conducted a research on 'sowing the seeds: towards reaping a harvest using social web applications in Nanyang Technology University Library, India. It was reported in the study that the library adopted social media in order to manage the changing pattern, use and expectations of different users. According to the authors, the projects have enhanced the library's traditional web portal and offered new opportunities for the library to engage its users. Thus, it was recommended that social media be integrated to carry out all library services.

In the Nigerian context, the study of Omeluzor et al., (2016) on social networking tools in library service delivery in South-East academic libraries reveals that some librarians used social media in libraries for delivery of library services. Akporhonor and Olise (2015b) carried out a study to determine librarians' use of social media for promoting library and information resources and services in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. The study revealed that blogs and Facebook are the most commonly used social media to promote library and information resources and services in the libraries. Findings also showed librarians' use of social media promotes two-way communication, makes communication with library users easier, and provides forum for feedback and increase library user's usage.

Similarly, Oriogu et al., (2020) carried out a study among library personnel who attended the 2019 National Conference/AGM of National Library Association in Delta State. The study reveals that the respondents mostly use Whatsapp, Facebook and Twitter in promoting and marketing of library resources and services. Petiti (2011) stated that having an active social media presence, we are fulfilling the expectations of some users and finding users we might not connect with elsewhere. Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) stated that social media are used mostly to provide current and up to date information to clients, provide links to other open-source library resources and give information about new arrivals in the case of books through links to the library world and through the updated list of journals.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive research survey design. The study was carried out in Rivers State universities. These universities include; Rivers State University (RSU), Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE). The population of the study comprise of all library personnel in these institutions. As at the time of this study, Rivers State universities has 52 personnel. Due to small population size, the census sampling technique was used. Data for the study were collected with a self-structure questionnaire tagged “Social Media Platforms Utilization Questionnaire (SMPUQ)”. The instrument was divided in to two parts 1 and 2. Part 1 was used to ascertain the demographic characteristic of the respondents (institutions) while part 2 was further divided in to three different sections to elicit information based on the objective of the study. The instrument was design and pattern after modified rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with numerical values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts. One expert in Measurement and Evaluation from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) and two experts in Library and Information Science from Rivers State University (RSU). The test-retest method was used to test for the reliability of the instrument. The data collected were analyse using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) coefficient which yield a reliability value of 0.84. In answering the research questions, mean with standard deviation was used. For decision on research questions, item with values ranging between 2.50 and above was taken as “Agree (A)” while mean values 2.50 was regarded as “Disagree (D)”.

RESULTS

The results of the study were presented as follows.

Research Question 1: What are the social media platforms used by library personnel in Rivers State universities?

Table 1: Mean Response on Social Media Platforms Used by Library Personnel in Rivers State Universities

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	RMK
1	Facebook	3.64	0.73	Agree
2	WhatsApp	3.84	0.74	Agree
3	Twitter	1.61	1.03	Disagree
4	LinkedIn	1.94	1.03	Disagree
5	Instagram	1.74	0.94	Disagree
6	Skype	2.19	0.80	Disagree
7	Telegram	3.70	0.69	Agree
8	YouTube	2.14	0.77	Disagree
9	Flickr	1.06	0.84	Disagree
10	MySpace	1.84	1.11	Disagree
11	Podcast	1.66	0.70	Disagree
12	Blog	2.01	1.03	Disagree
13	Podcast	1.43	0.66	Disagree
	Average Mean/SD	2.21	0.87	Disagree

Source: *Researchers' Field Work, 2022*

Result from Table 1 revealed that the respondents (Library Personnel) of Rivers State Universities agreed that majority of the social media platforms listed above are not used to enhance library service delivery in Rivers State Universities. This was shown in mean response with an average mean score of 2.21 with standard deviation value of 0.87. Since the

value of standard deviation are less than 1, it implies that the respondents were homogenous in their responses.

Research Question 2: How are social media platforms used by library personnel for service delivery enhancement in Rivers State universities?

Table 2: Mean Response on How Social Media Platforms are Used by Library Personnel in Rivers State Universities to Enhance Service Delivery

S/N	Social Media Platforms are Used for:	Mean	SD	RMK
1	Resources and services	3.84	0.61	Agree
2	Library news/events	2.66	1.01	Agree
3	Reference services	3.05	0.73	Agree
4	Research techniques and tips	3.41	0.80	Agree
5	Information literacy skills	2.76	0.84	Agree
6	Asking a librarian/online chat	2.99	0.64	Agree
7	Creating awareness about library	3.15	1.03	Agree
8	Current awareness services	3.05	1.01	Agree
9	User orientation	3.60	0.74	Agree
10	Overdue reminders	2.80	0.64	Agree
	Average Mean/SD	3.13	0.81	Agree

Source: *Researchers' Field Work, 2022*

Result from Table 2 revealed that the respondents (Library Personnel) of Rivers State Universities agreed that social media platforms are used for the above services in the library to enhance service delivery in Rivers State Universities. This was shown in mean response with an average mean score of 3.13 with standard deviation value of 0.81. Since the value of standard deviation are less than 1, it implies that the respondents were homogenous in their responses.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges facing utilization of social media platforms in service delivery by library personnel in Rivers State universities?

Table 3: Mean Response on Challenges Facing Social Media Platforms to Enhance Service Delivery

S/N	Challenges Facing Social Media Platforms are:	Mean	SD	RMK
1	Lack of awareness on the use of social media platforms in offering/providing library services.	2.84	0.71	Agree
2	Erratic power supply	3.11	0.66	Agree
3	Low interest of librarians in learning and utilizing social media	2.96	0.59	Agree
4	Lack of social media skills	3.04	0.67	Agree
5	Poor internet connectivity	3.70	0.80	Agree
	Average Mean/SD	3.03	0.69	Agree

Source: *Researchers' Field Work, 2022*

Result from Table 3 revealed that the respondents (Library Personnel) of Rivers State Universities agreed that social media platforms are faced with challenges in the library to enhance service delivery in Rivers State Universities. This was shown in mean response with an average mean score of 3.03 with standard deviation value of 0.69. Since the value of standard deviation are less than 1, it implies that the respondents were homogenous in their responses.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study shows that majority of the respondents mostly use Facebook and Whatsapp

platforms to provide/offer library services. This is in conformity with the findings of Odiachi and Okuonghae (2016) who found that Facebook and Whatsapp are the two social media platforms mostly used by librarians. On the library services that are performed using social media, it was discovered that most of the respondents use the social media platforms to create awareness about library resources and services and to share library news and events. This is not in conformity with the findings of Oriogu et al., (2020). Majority of the respondents indicated that poor internet connection and lack of constant power supply were the two major challenges to the effective use of social media platforms. This is in agreement with the study of Akporhonor and Olise (2015a) and Adewoyin, et al. (2017).

CONCLUSION

The use of social media has absolutely enhanced library services and has provided a new and excellent platform to the library professionals to reach out to their potential library users. It was also discovered that most of the librarians mainly use Facebook and Whatsapp platforms to promote library resources and services, share library news and events. Some of the challenges to the effective use of social media platforms include poor internet connectivity and lack of regular power supply.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. That the library management should provide opportunities for training and retraining of librarians on social media skills and emerging technologies.
2. The school management should also provide adequate internet facilities and improve on electricity supply so that the library staff can enjoy more access to the internet in order to provide effective and efficient services to their users.

REFERENCES

1. Abdulaziz, N., Boon, C.Y. & Loh, H. (2010). Sowing the seeds: Towards reaping a harvest using social web applications in Nanyang University of Technology Library. *World Library and Information Congress: 76th IFLA General Conference*, 1-15.
2. Adewojo, A. & Adebara, O. (2016). Social media usage by library staff in academic libraries: The Case of Yaba College of Technology, Lagos State, Nigeria. *Information and Knowledge Management*. 6 (1), 43-49.
3. Adewoyin, O. O., Onuoha, U. D., & Ikonne, C. N. (2017). Social media use and service delivery by librarians in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 16(4), 1–15.
4. Adigun, G. O., Adegbore, A. M., & Amuda, H. O. (2015). The Social library: integrating social networking into library reference services. In *Library Science and Administration: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 697-712).
5. Akporhonor, B. A., & Olise, F. N. (2015a). Challenges Librarians Encounter in the use of Social Media for Promoting Library and Information Resources and Services in University Libraries in South-South, Nigeria. *International Journal of Library Science*, 5(6), 208–214.
6. Akporhonor, B. A., & Olise, F. N. (2015b). Librarians' Use of social media for Promoting Library and Information Resources and Services in University Libraries in South-South, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 5(6), 1–9.
7. Aras, B. B. (2014). University Libraries and Social Media Policies. *Journal of Balkan Libraries Union*, 2(1), 21 - 35.

8. Bradley, F. (2016). A World with universal literacy: The role of libraries and access to information in the UN 2030 Agenda. *IFLA Journal*, 42(2); 118-125.
9. Collins, G. & Quan-Haase, A. (2012). Social media and academic libraries: Current trends and future challenges. *ASIST*, 2(4); 26–31.
10. Dixon, B. (2012). *Social media for school leaders* (First Edition). Jossey-Bass.
11. Ezeani, C. N., & Igwesi, U. (2012). Using social media for dynamic library service delivery: The Nigeria experience. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 12(1); 58 - 67.
12. Fought, R. L., Gahn, P., & Mills, Y. (2014). Promoting the Library Through the Collection Development Policy: A Case Study. *Journal of Electronic Resources in Medical Libraries*.
13. Iwu-James, J., Haliso, Y., & Ifijeh, G. (2020). Leveraging Competitive Intelligence for Successful Marketing of Academic Library Services. *New Review of Academic Librarianship*, 26(1), 151–164.
14. Kaplan, A.M. & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite: The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53, 59- 68.
15. Khan, S. A., & Bhatti, R. (2012). Application of social media in marketing of library and information services: A case study from Pakistan. *Webology*, 9(1); 45 – 58.
16. Odiachi, R. A. and Okuonghae, O. (2016). Use of social media for library outreach and collaboration by librarians in private university libraries in South-South Nigeria. *Communicate. Journal of Library and Information Science*, 18(1&2); 124-135.
17. Omeluzor, S. U., Oyovwe-Tinuoye, G. O., & Abayomi, I. (2016). Social networking tools in library service delivery: The case of academic libraries in south-east zone of Nigeria. *Journal of Library and Information Technology*, 36(5), 269–277.
18. Omini, E. U. B. I., & Ayanlade, K. (2019). *Utilization of Social Media Platforms by Librarians for Promoting Library Resources and Services in Nigerians' Tertiary Institutions in Cross River State*. *Global Journal of Educational Research*, 18(2), 1-8.
19. Oriogu, C. D., Ogbuiyi, S. U., Oriogu-ogbuiyi, D. C., Seimode, F. D., & Ogunojemite, T. A. (2020). Exploring social media in Performing Library Services in Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice. E-Journal of Nigerian Librarians*, 2(3);1-20.
20. Petiti, J. (2011). Twitter and Facebook for user collection requests. *Collection Management*, 36 (4):253-258.
21. Qualman, E. (2012). *Social nomics: How social media transforms the way we live and do business*. John Wiley & Sons.
22. Taylor & Francis. (2014). Use of social media by the library: Current practices and future opportunities. Retrieved from <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/access/white-paper-social-media.pdf>
23. Tripathi, M., & Kumar, S. (2010). Use of Web 2.0 tools in academic libraries: A reconnaissance of the international landscape. *The International Information & Library Review*, 42(3), 195-207.