Application and Use of Social Media Platforms for Reference Services Deliveries by Librarians in Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria

R. O Bakai, T. A. Said, and J. D. Ali

College Library Federal College of Education, Kontagotra

Abstract: *The study investigated the Application and Use of Social Medial Platforms for Reference Service Deliveries in Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria. The study was guided by three specific objectives and corresponding research questions. Descriptive survey design was used and the target population consisted of 65 reference/professional librarians working in the libraries in the colleges of education in north-central, Nigeria. Complete enumeration of the 65 personnel was carried out, structured questionnaire were used for data collection with descriptive statistics used for the analysis of the data collected. Result showed that almost all the personnel of libraries in the study applied and used one form of the social media platforms. The respondents strongly agreed that application of social media platforms to library services most importantly the reference service will have strong effects on the service delivery of the library. It further shows that information sharing and library notification services are greatly influenced by the application and use of social media platforms. The study recommends among others that the college library staff be made to adopt and use social media in service delivery to enable them tackle emerging challenges in the 21st century electronic environment. The library management should sponsor/conduct seminars, workshops and conferences for librarians on the use of social media for personnel in the library. The library management/institution management should provide enabling environment to help the librarians in the social media section to be more proactive in the line of their duties.*

Keywords: application, use, social media platforms, reference service delivery, library, librarians.

INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries support the academic community by delivering services to meet the teaching, research and learning needs of staff and students. They play a key role in the educational system of their parent institutions by providing a variety of services to a wide

range of users in the academic environment. Colleges of education libraries acquire, process, manage and disseminate information resources through which their parent institutions conduct research and produce high-level manpower. They provide access to information resources in diverse formats to users. They provide timely and relevant information in support of teaching and research needs of their parent institutions. The colleges of education library is a repository of information resources especially the reference sources. These resources are the traditional information resources which include books, journals, maps, encyclopedia, dictionaries, newspapers, yearbooks, gazettes, directories, abstracts, indexes and periodicals. Reference services are provided to keep their patrons abreast of the latest developments in their disciplines. An e-Reference service is a digital platform that allows users to access and manage reference materials, such as books, articles, research papers, and other sources online. It provides convenient and efficient way to explore and utilize reference materials. E-Reference service facilitates easy access to knowledge and information.

Application and use of social media platforms for reference services offers convenient and accessible ways to provide information and support in a familiar and comfortable environment for users, foster community engagement and interaction, and stays up-to-date with user needs and preferences. Social medial platforms enable libraries to connect to their patrons outside the physical building and build relationships with them to explore and utilize reference materials, often with features like; search functionality, digital borrowing or access, annotation and note-taking tools, collaboration and sharing options, etc. Social media tools such as Facebook, Blog, WhatsApp and Twitter allow individuals and organizations to actively engage in communication process not only as information receivers but also as message generators. They are online platforms designed to facilitate information sharing and exchanges of views. Social media are being adopted and used by libraries all over the world. They enable communication among libraries and their users thereby serving as an opportunity for information dissemination and the marketing of new services. Social media are used for marketing of library products and services, announce news and for fund raising. Instant messaging (IM) is used to enhance reference service delivery processes. It allows immediate response to inquiries from library patrons.

Statement of the Problem
Reference service delivery from inception has been one the bedrock of libraries' existence since libraries are established for the sole purpose of providing information services. Colleges of education libraries in Nigeria provide wide range of services such as reference services; inter library loan, selective dissemination of information service, current awareness service, and indexing and abstracting services. Many of these services are delivered manually and the delivery of these services through traditional means has been cumbersome and time-wasting. Traditional library services restrict users to the available resources available within the library collections only. Hence, access to information is limited to print resources and this places the patrons at disadvantage with limited information resources. There is no doubt that the traditional library and information services need improvement as a result of its limitations and inadequacies. This leads to introduction of modern technologies to library to aid service

delivery to meet the demands of their users and remain relevant and retain their place as information providers in this age.

The introduction of ICT has brought changes in the way libraries operate thereby demanding new skills from librarians to provide services relevant to the needs of today's users who have the option of either visiting the library physically or virtually. The virtual nature of today's libraries, however, demands that librarians are not only skilled in the use of ICTs but are also knowledgeable in the use of social media tools for information dissemination among users. This research intends to investigate the efforts of libraries in the colleges of education in the North-Central, Nigeria towards the application of the social media technologies into reference service delivery.

Objectives of the Study
The aim and objectives of this study is to ascertain the use of social media in delivery of reference services by librarians in Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria
The specific objectives were to:
  i.   find out the types of social media used in reference services in Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria
  ii. ii. identify the effects of social media delivery in reference services on the users of the library in Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria;
  iii. iii. Identify the extent of application and utilization of social media in reference services at the libraries in Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria.

Research question
  i.   what are the types of social media used in reference services in Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria
  ii.   to what extent are social media tools being utilized by the Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria in the reference services?
  iii. what are the effects of social media utilization in reference services on the users of the Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria?
  iv.   determine the relationship between the social media skills and service delivery by librarians in Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media have been recognized globally as vital way in which librarians' uses to promote research, teaching and learning in the academic environment. Social media is used to manage reference services in effective and efficient way to meet the user's preference. It is a medium used in transmitting, interacting, collaborating and sharing of information to users irrespective of their location and it usually during reference services delivery in the library. Every academic library has reference services section and they work as a team to ensure that they attend to all academic issues regarding the library its resources {Akagha, 2021).

Social media have been embraced by libraries and information professionals to promote information service delivery. The application of social media platform had significant effects on information delivery among library personnel in Olusegun Oke Library LAUTECH, Ogbomoso, Oyo State. The need for internet access in the library is germane and library should invest more on internet infrastructure to promote social media for effective service delivery. It is no doubt that social media is becoming more popular among libraries and librarians to get more acquainted with different platforms and best to deploy them in library service delivery. This also brings about effectiveness in information delivery and efficiency in library services (Olugbenga, Zubairu and Hamzat, 2022).

Social media is very important in academic libraries as it will enable library staff to be more engaged with library users online. There is need for academic library management to integrate 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 (Uwandu and Osuji, 2022).

Social media platforms have the potential to help the researcher on finding better information which led the librarian to integrate social media tools into library websites (de Sarkar, 2021). Similarly, many library staff have accepted that a well formulated, structured and analysed strategy is a prerequisite for the implementation of social media in marketing library resources and services (Mensah and Onyancha, 2021).

Social media brings essential services to library users and its development leads to a dynamic library service. Social media comes in many forms like blogs, forums, chat apps, business networks sharing them feeling and education information, social problems in the platform. Social media network is a powerful tool for sharing information with others. The Librarians and other institutions can continue to have good relationship with their users or members. Similarly, libraries also need to use such social media tools to reach the top to integrate their user's communities within the library. The librarian is Knowledge manage, information Scientist, Technology gatekeeper, and library staff must have technical knowledge and they need to know about present technologies. The social media evolution is changing the way to individual and organisations interact, and libraries with their users (Kasimani and Kasilingam (2019).

Social media provides a dynamic and interactive way for libraries to engage with their users, disseminate information, and offer reference services. Social media acts as a bridge between valuable content and audience. Library use all posts which are relevant and add value to its patrons. Though services from library to library may vary. By utilizing social media, libraries can tailor their reference services to meet the needs of their users. This includes responding to

queries, providing research assistance, and offering tutorials on how to use library resources effectively (Smith and Jones, 2024).

However, several research works had been carried out on the use and applications of social media technologies to reference service delivery in the university libraries in virtually all regions of Nigeria but similar research work are scanting in the colleges of education libraries in order to improve the service delivery system of the college libraries.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey design was used for this study. The population of the study consists of 65 personnel working in the libraries in the colleges of education in North-Central, Nigeria.
The population and of course, the number of personnel working in the libraries in the colleges of education was 65 and because of the manageable size of the population, the researcher decided to embark on complete enumeration and thus there was no need for sampling. Adopting the entire population of ICT personnel helped to generate adequate data leading to adequate findings, more so that Obim and Apokurerie (2022) embark on a complete enumeration of 100 LIS Educators in seven university-based library schools in South-East Nigeria because the population was manageable.

The self-designed copies of the questionnaire were validated, by a senior librarian and an ICT and English experts respectively. The corrected version of the instruments was pilot-tested outside the study areas. For this purpose, Federal College of Education, Oyo Special was used for the exercise. In this case, 20 copies of the questionnaire were used.Data for the study was collected through filled copies of the questionnaire. The copies of the questionnaire were administered to the personnel working in libraries by the researcher and research assistants. The researchers and the research assistants retrieved the collect filled copies of the questionnaire and checklist from the respondents within two (2) weeks. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, the mean and standard deviation were used in analysing data related to research questions.

Data Analysis and Discussion
This section provides analysis of data in the form of descriptive statistics in order to provide answer to research questions.

Research question 1: What are the types of social media used in reference services in Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria?

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Table 4.2. Displays the types of social media platforms in use by the libraries in colleges of education in north Central, Nigeria.

S/N	Types of Social Media Use	Yes	No
1.	Facebook	√	
2.	RSS feed (Really Simple Syndication)		√
3.	Wiki	√	
4.	Twitter	√	
5.	Instant Messaging (IM)	√	
6.	Slideshare		√
7.	Blogs		√
8.	You tube		√
9.	WhatsApp	√	
10.	Myspace		√
11.	Podcasts		√
12.	Google+	√	
13.	Flickr		√
14.	Linkedln	√	
15.	Researchgate	√	
16.	Pinterest		√
17.	Instagram	√	

Table 4.2 above shows that almost the staff of all the libraries in the study apply and use (Facebook, Wiki, Twitter, IM, WhatsApp, Google+, and Instagram) as social media platforms which they use in interacting with their patrons either for selective dissemination services, current awareness service or sending reminder messages. Although these may not be officially adopted in the school website but the staff make use of them to ease their service delivery with clientele.

Research question 2: what extent are social media tools being utilized by the Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria in the reference services.

Table 4.3. Displays the extent of social media platforms use by the libraries in colleges of education in north Central, Nigeria.

S/N	frequency of social media use	SA 4	Percent (%)	A 3	Percent (%)	D 2	Percent (%)	SD 1	Percent (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	Facebook	4	8.3	16	33.3	28		0	0	2.5	1.58
2.	RSS feed (Really Simple Syndication)	0	0	3	6.3	6	12.5	39	81.3	1.25	1.11
3.	Wiki	18	37.5	14	29.2	6	12.5	10	20.8	2.83	1.68
4.	Twitter	8	16.7	8	16.7	30	62.5	2	4.2	2.45	1.56
5.	Instant Messaging (IM)	7	14.6	12	25	26	54.2	3	6.3	2.47	1.57
6.	Slideshare	0	0	0	0	18	37.5	30	62.5	1.36	1.16
7.	Blogs	0	0	5	10.4	19	39.5	24	50	1.39	1.17
8.	You tube	2	4.2	3	6.3	22	45.8	21	43.8	1.70	1.30
9.	WhatsApp	44	91.6	3	6.3	1	2.1	0	0	3.89	1.97
10.	Myspace	0	0	4	8.3	23	47.9	21	43.8	1.56	1.24
11.	Podcasts	1	2.1	4	8.3	7	14.6	36	75	1.31	1.14
12.	Google+	36	75	10	20.8	1	2.1	1	2.1	3.68	1.89
13.	Flickr	0	0	1	2.1	16	33.3	31	64.6	1.20	1.09
14.	Linkedln	19	39.6	11	22.9	12	25	6	12.5	2.89	1.7
15.	Researchgate	23	47.9	11	22.9	7	14.6	7	14.6	3.04	1.74
16.	Pinterest	0	0	3	6.3	15	31.3	30	62.5	1.43	1.19
17.	Instagram	26	51.2	12	25	7	14.6	3	6.3	3.27	1.8

Table 4.3 above reveal that respondents strongly agreed that they use more of Wiki (37.5%), WhatsApp (91.6%) and Instagram (51.2%) than any other platforms and strongly disagreed that they used less of Pinterest (62.5%), Flickr (64.6%), Myspace (43.8), you tube (43.8%), and Blogs (50%) and Slide share (62.5%). Thus, the other social media platforms were moderately used in the libraries

Research question three 3: What are the effects of social media utilization in reference services on the users of the Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria?

Table 4.4. Displays the effects of social media platforms use by the libraries in colleges of education in north Central, Nigeria.

S/N	Effects of Social Media Application/Use in Reference Service	SA 4	Percent (%)	A 3	Percent (%)	D 2	Percent (%)	SD 1	Percent (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	Adequate opportunities in enhancing reference service delivery	28	58.3	12	25	5	10.4	3	6.3	3.35	1.85
2.	Provides global visibility of the patrons and the library	30	62.5	10	20.8	5	10.4	3	6.3	3.40	1.84
3.	Enables individuals to share contents	32	66.6	11	22.9	5	10.4	0	0	3.56	1.89
4.	Facilitates individuals to interact, engage and communicate at remote locations	29	60.4	13	27.1	6	12.5	0	0	3.48	1.87
5.	Enables library to connect with patrons and interact with them simultaneously	30	62.5	12	25	5	10.4	1	2.1	3.48	1.88
6.	Makes patrons aware of new arrivals and holdings of the library	32	66.6	14	29.6	2	4.2	0	0	3.63	1.96

From the table 4.4 above, the respondents strongly agreed that application of social media platform to library services most importantly the reference service have strong effects on the service delivery from all perspectives. For instance, 62.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that it provides global visibility of the patrons and the library, while 66.6% strongly agreed that Enables individuals to share contents, as well as makes patrons aware of new arrivals and holdings of the library. Also, 58.3 & believes it enhance adequate opportunities in reference service delivery.

Research question 4: What are the relationship between the social media skills and service delivery by librarians in Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria?

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Table 4.5. Displays the relationship between the social media skills and service delivery through the use of social media platforms by the libraries in colleges of education in north Central, Nigeria.

S/N	Types of Services	Great Extent 4	Percent (%)	Moderate Extent 3	Percent (%)	Low Extent 2	Percent (%)	Never 1	Percent (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Information sharing/public relation	27	56.3	12	25	8	16.6	1	2.1	3.35	1.83
2	Reference services	6	12.5	11	22.9	30	62.5	1	2.1	2.46	1.57
3	Library notification	28	58.3	13	27.1	4	8.3	3	6.3	3.38	1.84
4	Electronic document delivery	5	10.4	10	20.8	31	64.9	2	4.2	2.5	1.58
5	Online help services	7	14.6	15	31.3	23	47.9	3	6.3	2.63	1.62
6	Current awareness/news dissemination	10	20.8	10	20.8	27	56.3	1	2.1	2.60	1.61
7	Online chat	13	27.1	14	29.6	20	41.6	1	2.1	2.81	1.68
8	Posting of library events	12	25	15	31.3	19	39.6	2	4.2	2.77	1.66
9	Information literacy instruction	11	22.9	16	33.3	21	43.8	0	0	2.79	1.67
10	User orientation	14	29.6	15	31.3	17	35.4	2	4.2	2.85	1.69

The above table shows that Information sharing/public relation (56.3%) and Library notification (58.3%) services have been influence to great extent as a result of the application of social media platforms to library services. While Reference services (62.4%), Electronic document delivery (64.9%), and online help services (47.9%), Current awareness/news dissemination (56.3%), online chat (41.6%), Posting of library events (39.6%), Information literacy instruction (43.8%) and User orientation (35.4%) are not greatly influenced by the social media adoption in the libraries services of colleges of education in north Central, Nigeria.

Summary of Findings

Based on the data collected and analysed for this study major findings were summarised below:

1. findings shows that majority of staff surveyed engaged in the application and use of one form of social media platform or the other to ease communication among them and their patrons in order to aid service delivery.
2. Based on the response of the respondents it was observed that the staff in Colleges of Education Libraries in North-Central, Nigeria used wiki, WhatsApp and Instagram platforms than other social media platforms.
3. Respondents strongly agreed that application of social media platforms to library service most importantly reference service have strong effects on the service delivery from all perspectives.
4. The respondents believed that relationship between social media skills and service delivery by librarians in Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria is very strong and has influence service delivery to a great extent.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is obvious that official adoption/application and use of social media platform in service delivery of libraries in colleges of education in North-Central, Nigeria will greatly benefit the libraries and their parent institutions as well as promotes their images. However, the library and school management should have it at the back of their minds that they have to put a lot of effort to the application of these technologies by deploying latest equipment into it in order to achieve the objectives. Social media has become the driving force in the expansion of distance learning. The use of social media have caused a great infusion of data into lives of adults and have in turn caused them to assume creative roles in their social lives in addition to their personal lives.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. Library staff should be made to adopt and use social media in service delivery to enable them tackle emerging challenges in the 21st century electronic environment and further be more responsive to the need of users thereby retaining the library's vital role in supporting teaching, learning and research.
2. The college/library management should sponsor/conduct seminars, workshops and conferences for librarians in the social media unit library to enable them acquire more and balanced knowledge needed in tackle emerging challenges in the 21st century.
3. The college/library management should provide an enabling environment to help the librarians in social media section to be more proactive in their day to day services.
4. While being friendly and approachable, ensure that all communications maintain a professional tone. This builds trust and credibility for your reference services.
5. Regularly assess the effectiveness of your social media strategies. Gather feedback from users and be willing to adapt your approach based on what works best.

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