

Full Length Research

Libraries and Social Media as Catalysts for National Unity and Security in Nigeria

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This paper addresses the issues surrounding the library and social media as catalysts for national unity and security in Nigeria. Nigeria's cooperate existence as a nation has continued to be threatened since independence to date; the importance of libraries to the society as social agencies designed to conserve knowledge, preserve the cultural heritage, provide information, undergird and underpin education and research and service as fountains of recreation was discussed. Also analysed were the roles social media play in information sharing as it affects national unity and security such as bridging communication gap and serving as sources of information for national security. Dangers of false information on social media such as the devastation of Nigeria's economy, political and social development by triggering fear, disrupting production distribution and marketing chains and weakening foreign and local investors' confidence in our system were discussed. Measures to combat false information such as surveillance, awareness among others were suggested. The paper concluded that libraries and social media will continue to play a vital role in security and national unity in Nigeria as an enlightened nation, is a united and secured nation

Keywords: Libraries, Social Media, Unity, Security

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INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a West African country. With population of 170,218,600, the country is the most populous nation in Africa and is more than twice the population of California, yet it is classed as a developing country (Adama 2017). According to Musa (2015) quoting Aguolu (2009), libraries are social agencies designed to conserve knowledge, preserve the cultural heritage, provide information, undergird and underpin education and research and service as fountains of recreation. Libraries have functioned as instrument of political and social change and as a guardian of intellectual freedom. The major obligation of traditional libraries is to provide books,

multimedia reference and bibliographical resources that are necessary for the actualization of the academic mission of a nation. These objectives can only realize if the libraries are made effective through efficient, management and utilization of the library and information resources necessary for academic enterprise.

Education is an instrument par excellence for national development. Okiy (2017), noted that education involves the development of the whole person intellectually, psychologically, socially, vocationally, religiously or morally. This is why education is seen as an integral part of national development. Mensah (2011) noted that

education is a process through which people are formally trained to acquire knowledge and skills. Formal education comes from the training received from established schools from basic levels of tertiary levels. Through this process of education, people are expected to acquire knowledge and skills and hence specialize on specific fields of study in various universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. It is this knowledge that allows people to contribute meaningfully to national development. This has made the national educational policy and the national development plan of almost all the African states to emphasize on the right to quantitative and qualitative education for the African children. The relevance of library can never be relegated to the background in education and national development, because it is offering unprecedented access to information in all kinds of format.

National unity and security has been seen from different perspective of eminent scholars and development theorists. Muhammed (2012) quoting Brooks (2010) asserted that, national unity and security involves economic growth, modernization, equitable distribution of income an natural resources and socio-economic transformation of improved living standards of the people through the use of a country's natural, human and institutional resources. In the same vein Gojeh (2011), stated that national security involves transformation of all aspects of the life of society which encompasses the human, cultural, social, political, intellectual and material well-being of the people as well as the eradication of mass poverty and it's co-relates such as illiteracy, disease and short life expectancy. National unity and security are also seen as a process of nation building which brings about unity and enhances the quality of life of the people. Ameh (2015) averred that it was the quest for national unity that triggered and energized the founding fathers of modern Nigerian such as the great Zik Africa, Obafemi Awolowo, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa etc to pursue vigorously and struggle for political independence which was subsequently granted in 1960. This they could not achieve without benefiting from sound and efficient education system.

IMPORTANCE OF LIBRARY TO THE SOCIETY

The relevance of libraries and social media in education and national unity and security, the world over, especially in today's information driven society cannot be over emphasized. Libraries and social media are at the center of education business. Education is an integral part of a nation's that does not develop its educational system cannot develop. The major reason why most of the developing nations of the world are seen continually in crisis is because their educational system has been neglected. Added to this is the challenge of insufficient

schools and teachers, with no or outdated libraries and ICT resources, there is also improper funding of most of the developing nations educational system especially Nigeria, where the government do think they are being economically product, but on the contrary, they are actually sowing the seed of continued underdevelopment. According to Fatemeh, Farhard and Akran (2000), information is a crucial factor in national unity and security and the ability to use information tools is considered a source of power. No one uses what he has not, and the only available instrument for developing information in people is the education system.

In line with the above view on the importance of libraries to the society, Nyangoni (2017) advocated that mass literacy empowered is the only tool for sustained national unity and security. Thus; people in the rural and urban communities in Nigeria are in urgent need for relevant, efficient and current information resource, because it is a catalyst for overall development. Camble (2016) observed that successful rural information programme rests squarely on the availability and use of quality information by rural development workers and rural people noting that such a programme has failed in the past because the knowledge of their information needs was not so well considered.

There is no doubt that libraries and social media can play an indispensable role in the development of rural and urban Nigerian and also enhance various aspects of national unity and security. Libraries and social media can be used to energize the role of governance pillars in rural area. They could aid poverty alleviation and enhance speedy, transparent, accountable, efficient and effective interaction between the public business and other agencies. The goal of using ICT with the marginalized groups, such as the poor, is not only about overcoming the digital divide and also enforcing further process of social inclusion required for transformation of the environment and system that reproduces poverty (Warschauer, 2017).

Libraries and social media can be used to provide market information and lowering cost of transaction for the poor rural farmers and traders. Majority of the rural poor are often unaware of their rights, entitlement and the availability of various government schemes and extension services as hunger is seen as security risk. Libraries and information centers like mobile library, infor, kiosks, also the mobile phones can enhance their access to information. Through this medium, rural farmers can also be informed about the appropriate time to sell their produce. The teeming unemployed youth in the rural communities can also get information on available vacancies in the metropolis. Abduwahab (2017) citing Abiseth (2016) noted that Ghana, like Malaysia, Singapore and other more technology minded countries are today gradually and steadily taking ICTs to rural communities so as to bridge the digital divide between

urban and rural dwellers.

The agricultural extension workers can also access latest information on farm technology and product and disseminate same to the villagers who are mainly subsistence farmers. The health care system is another area where libraries and social media can play a major role in national development. Doctors and paramedical staff at the local centers or their subsidiary can access latest information about health schemes and seek advice from specialists about disease or ailments they cannot diagnose or treat.

According to Mensah (2011), some of the oppressive forces of human nature are illiteracy, disease, unemployment, hunger and poverty. A good educational policy can be used to suppress and subdue human problems. This is made possible through the inculcation of proper reading skills, attitude and knowledge which will increase the capacity of the individual to challenges posed by his environment. Since libraries and social media are at the center of education business, this can be used to address the aforesaid challenges in Nigeria.

Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak and compute at certain levels, Davidson (2015), noted that functionally, literacy involves skills needed to cope with everyday situations, such as reading newspapers or writing in application for job. Okiy (2017). Observed that the enormous power of libraries as tools for literacy education has made libraries and information resources centers in all the sectors of Nigeria's economy. Hence, today, libraries are found in all the tiers of our educational system including government agencies, research institutions and private organizations, such as print and electronic media, government agencies, bank, insurance companies, judiciaries etc. In Nigeria, libraries at the primary and secondary levels have been found to be instruments for all round educational development of the Nigerian child. Libraries are the nerve center of the school. Musa (2009) sees the school library as a place where a full range of information resources and accompanying services are accessible to both teachers and students. It represents a unified programme involving the use of audio-visual, printed sources and tools necessary to satisfy the educational needs and recreational interest of pupils, students and their teachers. This includes a variety of information resources such as textbooks, journals, reference books, multimedia resource etc, selected systematically, organized and disseminated to pupils, students and teachers with the sole aim of supporting and enriching the school curriculum (Ymar, 2013).

In the same vein, Ozioko (2016) also maintained that library plays a crucial part in encouraging reading at the early stage by making available pictures, books, stories, novels, magazines and topic books, so as to ensure that early quality childhood care and education is achieved. He stated that the primary level requires that such

materials like text books, reference works, topic books and audio-visual resource should be sufficiently available in the library to support curricular programmes thereby expanding learning resources. He went further to mention that at secondary school level, the school library, through the guidance of teachers, helps student to develop independent study. It is my through that libraries and information centers are the pivot of academic excellence and also a tool for literacy education. This is because they provide all the relevant information resources necessary for sustaining teaching, learning and front line research for all the tiers of learning. Adama (2017) noted that the academic health, intellectual vitality and effectiveness of educational institutions in producing high quality graduates into the labour market depend largely on the quality of information resources available in their libraries to support teaching and research functions.

In his view, Bello (2015), opined that access to free information has always played an important role in human life and as a basic human resource, its need was never a subject of controversy. The free and equal access to information by every member of the society irrespective of racial, religion, geo-political, social, economic status is a fundamental human right place. Users of today's libraries are looking for development information that is crucial for individuals and national development. Alluded to this, information is a vital resource for problem solving and decision making. Everybody, state and society requires it. In fact Karki (2015), stated that it is more important than other resources for national security and national unity.

On the other hand, Ezimwanyi (2011) citing Ogunisola (2016) posited that, today the role of libraries and professional librarians is changing world wide. They are no longer passive keepers and preservers of books rather they have evolved to become facilitators of information and lifelong learning opportunities with emphasis on identifying users' sources, needs and communicating solutions. Modern libraries, she further noted, are unfolding the community learning potentials by providing information on community issues, such as health, employment, continuing education and local history. Thus equitable access to information through the modern information technology is essential to enable educated and informed citizens participate in a democratic global community.

Access to modern information technology is currently one of the most attractive library services, thus Ezimwanyi (2011) citing IFLA (2015) stressed the active role of Libraries information Society. He states that they build capacity by effective use of information literacy and providing support and training for effective use of information resources including information communication technologies. This is specifically critical in promoting development agenda, because human resources are central to economic progress. In these

ways libraries contribute significantly to addressing the digital divide and the information that exist from it. They help to make the Millennium Development Goals a reality including the reduction of poverty.

Libraries and information centers are expected to provide information, current, affairs, reference services, educational guidance, simple classification and explanation of such things as cause of diseases, use and invention of medicines or drugs and world situations. They are also expected to conserve and preserve local artifacts including oral literature which in many developing countries like Nigeria, are believed to be essential for scholarship and knowledge of the society.

ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN RESEARCH PUBLICITY, VISIBILITY AND KNOWLEDGE SHEARING

We are seen ads giant not necessarily because of the quality of our national institutions and values, but simply by virtue of our large population and oil wealth. But in reality, the greatness of a nation has to be earned and is not determined just by the size of its population or the abundance of its natural resources but by quality of its research publicity and visibility. Social Media turn communication into an interactive dialogue. Social media takes on many different forms including magazines, internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, podcasts, photographs or pictures, videos, rating and social bookmarking. With the world in the midst of a social media revolution, it is more than obvious that social media like facebook, twitter, orkut, myspace, skype etc., are used extensively for the purpose of communication. This form of communication can be with a person or group of persons.

This online sharing of information also promotes the increase in the communication skill among the people especially among the learners/students of educational institutions. The social media tools have virtually brought people close to one another specially those living in far off places. Social media offers a variety of avenues through which we can communicate with people. In fact, social media is known to have been used widely in educational field also. Over the last 30 years the nature of communication has undergone a substantial change and it is still changing. Email has had a profound effect on the way people keep in touch. Communications are shorter and more frequent than when letters were the norm and response time has greatly diminished. Instant messaging has created another method of interaction, one where the length of messages is shorter and the style of the interaction is more conversational. Broadcast technologies like Twitter transform these short bursts of communication from one-on-one conversations to little news (or trivia) programs: which we can tune in whenever we want an update or have something to say a social

networking site provides a web-based platform for building social networks or social relations amongst people, e.g., shared interests or activities. They provide a means to interact over the internet, e-mail and now even the mobile phones. The most popular websites offering social networking currently are MySpace (started in 2003), linkedin (Started in 2003), Facebook (started in 2003) and twitter (started in 2005). A social networking site would allow a user to create profiles or personal homepages online and build up a social network. The profile page thus created is like the user's personalized webpage and contains profile information of the user like gender, religion, orientation, interests, place of birth, current location, marital status, books liked etc. The page can be customized as the user wants and include video clips, music files or photos on their page. Also included on the page is a list of friends that form the user's network. Typically, these friends are actual friends, acquaintances, and even strangers, who may have sent a friend request and the user has included them in his/her list

THE MAIN ADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA ARE:

Sharing of ideas: Social networking sites allow user to share ideas, activities, events and interests within their individual networks. Web based social networking service make it possible to connect people who share interests and activities across political, economic and geographic borders.

Tool of communication: Social networks are increasingly being used by teachers and learners as a communication tool. Teachers create chat rooms, forums and groups to extend classroom discussion to posting assignments, tests and quizzes, to assisting with homework outside of the classroom setting. Learners can also form groups over the social networking sites and engage in discussion over a variety of topics.

Bridges communication gap: Social media bridges the distance among different people. It offer platforms for online users to find others who share the same interests and build virtual communities based on those shared interests. With the availability of social media technologies and services, content sharing and user interaction has become relatively easy and efficient.

Sources of information: Content generating and sharing sites serve as sources of information for various topics. Users can search for content, download and use the content available on these sites free of cost.

Important customer interaction tool: Social Media Networking is perfect for customer interaction, customer feedback, and customer support. New business contacts can be obtained for networking purposes.

Important crisis communication tool: When the major forms of public relations tool fail, social media can be used extensively to communicate with the general public regarding any crisis situation that might have gripped the nation or any organization. But it is important to remember that while social media can have a positive impact during natural disaster, it can also have a negative impact

DANGERS OF FALSE INFORMATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Fake news is a type of yellow journalism or propaganda that consist of deliberate misinformation or hoaxes spread via traditional print and broadcast news media or online social media. This false information is mainly distributed by social media, but is periodically circulated through mainstream media. Fake news is written and published with the intent to mislead in order to damage an agency, entity, or person, and/or gain financially or politically, often using sensationalist, dishonest, or outright fabricated headlines to increase readership, online sharing, and internet click revenue (Royal Commission on National Development, 2005).

Back in 2013: The World Economic Forum warned that so called 'digital wildfires', that is, unreliable information going viral online (aka fake news) would be one of the biggest threats faced by society. The most common fake stories we hear about revolve around politics, but we cannot undermined the impact that fake news stories have had on society in general. One of the main concerns of fake news stories is that they can polarize society, particularly during political event. Fake news stories can not only polarise different groups within a nation but also affect international relations. Social networks connect us with other like-minded people. Our networks of 'friends' on Facebook, or 'followers' on Twitter, generally consist of people who share our values and beliefs. These values may be social, political or economic, and the information we share through these networks helps to define who we are and what we believe in. Rumours, misinformation and false information on social media proliferate before, during and after disasters and emergencies. While this information cannot be completely eliminated, libraries can use various tactics and strategies to offset bad information.

There is also a flip side to the use of social media tools. Sometimes, such tools are misused by people which leads to interference into one's privacy. Such instances can lead to dangerous proportions keeping in view the ethical aspect of the use of such media.

Fake news from media has devastated our economic, political and social development by friggering fear, public and uncertainty, disrupting production distribution and marketing chains and weaking foreign and local investor'

confidence in our system. The deliberate

Deployment of fake news by APC in an attempt to smear the PDP and its members ended up demarketing our country in the international arena and eroded the confidence of the world had on our markets and business concerns, resulting in the current dearth of investments collapse of business, job losses and drop in national productivity.

Measures to Combat Fake News

Surveillance: Rebutst surveillance and compliance mechanism to ensure healthy accessible content to people. Source of news should be verified.

Reporting: People should have the opportunity to report illicit content through flagging, and definite steps should be taken to see its credibility. Also involved in this should be scrutinized.

Awareness: Social media can also be used to increase the awareness in people to ensure equality, end of discrimination on any grounds and ensure harmony.

Working with Authority/Sharing info: It should be the ethnical responsibility to work in close connection with the concerned authority and share data at times of crisis for reasons of National Security and Public Order.

CONCLUSION

The library remains the most credible information center, where Nigerians can be enlightened on issues that unit the country rather than divide the country. Social media policy must be formulated by libraries to regulate its use in information sharing, this will checkmate false information. Most current information are recorded in electronic format, ICT has also contributed immensely to the performance of librarians in the discharge of their duties such as in cataloguing, reference services, circulation management, serials control etc, hence, the benefits of training and retraining of library staff to handle social media as tools for service delivery cannot be over-emphasized.

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