Full Length Research

Social Media Platforms and Effective Library Services Delivery in Covid-19 Era

[1]Dr. Idachaba, J. Asibi, [2]Vehe, Emmanuel Tor and [3]Dr. Columbus Udofot, CLN.

[1]FSI Library Department of Information Service. Email:idachabajoy@yahoo.com, Tel: 07039666506
[2]Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Library, Mkd. Benue State University, Makurdi, Benue State.
Email: etor@bsum.edu.ng, Tel: 08059632740
[3]Library and Information Science Dept., Benue State University, Makurdi , Nigeria.
Corresponding author's Email: columbusudofot@yahoo.com
Tel: 08035637958

The study assesses social media platforms and effective library services delivery in covid-19 era in Nigeria. The research adopted a descriptive survey design. The area of the study includes the two universities in Benue State (JS Tarka University Makurdi and Benue State University Makurdi). The population of the study comprises of 156 given the total number of library staff from the two selected universities in Benue State. A simple random sampling technique was employed. The sample size for the study was 10 from each selected university, giving a total sample size of 20 respondents. The instrument used for this study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was titled "social media platforms and effective library services delivery in covid-19 era in Nigeria."The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient for a measure of internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability coefficient achieved was 0.77. The instrument was administered personally to the respondents by the researchers. In order to minimize loss of questionnaire, all completed copies of questionnaire were collected on the spot. Mean was used to analyze the research questions. Mean scores of < 4.00 were rejected while mean scores ≥ 4.00 were accepted. The study found that the social media platforms that disseminated information during COVID-19 era are Facebook, Twitter, Blog, WhatsApp, MySpace, LinkedIn and Wikis. The study also found that social media platforms disseminated information to high extent and people utilized those platforms every hour for information during the COVID-19 era. Finally, the study recommended that safety measures should be put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: social media platforms, library services, covid-19, Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

A Library is a collection of materials, books or media that are easily accessible. Library provides physical and digital access to materials. A library collection includes books, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, films, maps, prints, document, microform, CDs, cassettes, videotapes, DVDs, Blu-ray Discs, e-books, audio books, databases, table games and other formats. Services offered by a library are variously described as library services, information services (Ladan et.al., 2020). The library services are centered on user services which include: user education (orientation/instruction services), inter-library loan/connection services, abstracting and

indexing services, bibliographical services, reference services and circulation services. Other services include: photocopying services; compilation of bibliographies; and publishing (Ifidon, 2008). According to Anyoagu (2007) these library services also support the user's accessibility of information from both physical and virtual resources which includes current awareness services; strategic dissemination of information; document delivery services; repackaging services; facsimile services; binding services as well as referral services. Library services are services that a library renders to its patrons and users of information. Example of library services are information consultancy, indexing and abstracting, current awareness services (CAS), user education, reference services, selective dissemination of information (SDI), book loan, photocopying, binding, computer typesetting, CDROM searching and publishing among others. These services enable users to gain access to library products and resources.

Social media is a virtual information sharing space which compliments face-to-face interaction and relationships between individuals. Fang, Hu, Li, and Tsai (2014) looked at social media as a computer and mobile-mediated tools that facilitate interaction and sharing of information in text, visual, audio and video forms in an online networking environment. Social media platforms include Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube, Blogs, Wikis, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Flickr, Orkut among others. Social media operate in dialogic transmission where there may be many sources to many receivers of information, pictures, images and other resources. However, Rogers (2012), posited that social media are information content created by people using highly accessible and scalable publishing technologies. He further expressed that social media is a shift in how people discover, read, and share news, information, and content. Kruger and Painter, (2011) see social media as a virtual information sharing space which promotes face-to-face interaction and relationships between individuals.

World Health Organization (2020) noted that coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered novel strain of coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2. The virus was first discovered in the city of Wuhan, China, and it has spread to almost all countries across the globe. COVID-19 belongs to a family of viruses. The coronavirus causes various symptoms such as pneumonia, fever, breathing difficulty, and lung infection (WMHC, 2020). Li, et al., (2020) posits that the World Health Organization (WHO) used the term 2019 novel coronavirus to refer to a coronavirus that affected the lower respiratory tract of patients with pneumonia in Wuhan, China on 29 December 2019. The WHO announced that the official name of the 2019 novel coronavirus is coronavirus disease (COVID-19) (WHO, 2020). However, WHO (2020) stated that coronavirus seems to spread from person to person by the same mechanism as other common cold or influenza viruses i.e. by face to face contact with a sneeze or cough, or from contact with secretions of people who are infected. The common symptoms of an infected coronavirus patient include fever, dry cough, tiredness, shortness of breath, pains and aches, sore throat, and very few people will report diarrhea, nausea or a runny nose (WHO, 2020). Most people infected with the COVID-19 will experience mild-to-moderate fever and respiratory illness with no special treatment available. Ryu and Chun (2020) expressed that (COVID-19) is a disorder with the greatest social impact due to several factors, including associated deaths, its geographical expansion, stock exchange fall worldwide, cancellation of sporting/ artistic events, and shortage of goods in marketplaces, among others.

In order to maintain the lockdown and to prevent the spread of the coronavirus (Covid 19), social media facilities were introduced in library services which helped in facilitating easy access to information with a wide range of patron. Hamade (2013) emphasized the popularity and usage of social media, especially among students and young populations, which has increased over the past few years. This has given room for its utilization in various library services which are provided online. COVID-19 pandemic has affected library services to an extent that libraries too have proposed digital avenues to deliver information to her users and provided them with online support in their search for information (Friday, Oluchi & Ngozi 2020). Friday, Oluchi and Ngozi (2020) further opined that in spite ofCOVID-19 and other lockdown regulations put up by government, the vision of the library should go beyond the physical library services to digital and convenient ways at which users and library patrons can be reached even in their remote locations. Here, library users and patrons do not necessarily need to come physically to the library (Collins & Quan-Hasse, 2012). This is true because social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Blog can link users with their information needs in a faster and more efficient manner. Therefore, the adoption of social media tools can help to enhance library consulting services, and advertising of library products (Friday, Oluchi & Ngozi, 2020).

Social media as a Web-based channel of information dissemination is rapidly permeating all aspects of library and information services. Also, it is observed that social media is rapidly becoming the most preferred means of establishing social/professional networks among librarians, and it is also being used to communicate with potential library users, as well as extending the information services to other remote users particularly in the academic community (Quadri & Idowu, 2016). In the information profession, particularly in libraries, universities, and colleges, social media tools serve as the platform mostly suited for individuals to interact, disseminate, and share information among themselves (Sahu, 2013). Librarians are now realizing the potentials of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube,

LinkedIn, Skype, and Google+, and other social tools and are making efforts to integrate them into library services such as library orientation, new arrival of library resources, references services, strategic dissemination of information (SDI), as well as customer services in general. Social media tools, mostly MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Delicious, Flickr, Blogs, Wikis, Youtube, Podcasts, and Hi5 have enabled libraries to connect their users and allowed librarians to adopt a new role by placing themselves into a social realm with users (Ezeani & Igwesi, 2012). By reading blogs, group postings, and message boards, the librarian becomes an active participant, who is able to anticipate and advise patrons as needs arise. Social media tools have also enabled libraries to link their various patron profiles which keep them abreast their information needs.

Libraries now have a fan page on Facebook which help them to market the library's services and products. By linking to the library's website, the Facebook page acts as a portal to the library. Blogs and wikis have been recognized as ideal sources to disseminate news and information. Blogs in academic libraries are tools to reach out to students. Blogs and Twitter are a real-time communication platform and have been overwhelmingly used to market the library services and products. According to Musibau et.al. (2011), social media tools also allow users to create an account, post and receive messages to networks of contacts, as opposed to sending bulk email messages. There are libraries which use Twitter to connect themselves with important information sources. These social media tools and their networking sites help establish a cordial relationship with users while attracting them to the library environment.

Libraries have increased the use of Facebook and Twitter to connect, communicate as well as collaborate with users in an innovative way, and providing the needed services to users. Suraweere et al (2011) admitted that the availability of online social networks in libraries and information organizations is increasingly prevalent and a growing tool that is being used to communicate with more potential library users. Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) added that social media tools sites are two-way transparent communications that encourage a feedback mechanism; connecting people with shared interest. Furthermore, the availability of social networking tools enables librarians to identify library patrons on the social cyberspace and pro-actively provide the type of information that would normally result from reference service. Social media tools are not only being available for promoting services, programs and new resources but they are also used for reference service. Libraries have also provided available platforms such as Ask a Librarian, meebo and twitter for students to use and to ask questions in "real time and this is assisting in promoting the library as a relevant, efficient and helpful place.

With the advent of social media tools, libraries can now relate to her wide users even in remote areas. The availability of social media for libraries also enhances two-way communication which afforded libraries to be in tandem with their users' changing needs and expectations. These platforms of information service delivery can increase library's reach to the patrons. Social media tools in libraries act as information resource while supporting collaboration between students and libraries. Succinctly put, social media tools are rebranding the library services in view of the current trends especially the Covid 19 pandemic.

Since the declaration of Covid 19 pandemic in the world, the adoption of social media tools in libraries has been agitated for. The Covid 19 pandemic has opened up many deficiencies of the libraries in providing efficient service delivery to patrons. To a large extent, social media tools have been supportive for library services and have increased efficiency and quick information delivery to library patrons. Adeleke and Habila (2012) stated that both the library personnel and patrons are aware of the importance of adopting social media for both personal and professional use. Therefore, social media tools have been adopted in most library services delivery. Since the Covid 19 pandemic, some libraries have embarked on publishing electronic research guides and tutorials online while integrating help content and virtual reference services into their Facebook pages and Websites.

The lockdown placed by government due to the Covid 19 pandemic has exposed and motivated libraries to adopt Facebook, Blog and Wiki to serve library patrons more effectively. Aharony (2009) revealed that library personnel can adopt social media such as blog to post information related to professional, personal and both issues on the same platform. Otulugbu (2019) reported that Web 2.0 tools such as Facebook are being adopted in libraries to deliver efficient services while the least used among the tools were Flickr, podcast and social bookmarking. The adoption of social media tools in libraries in this Covid 19 pandemic era has enhanced web-based Current Awareness Services (CAS) which is designed to help time constrained users keep abreast of the latest developments, issues, and activities related to selected topics in their fields. With the adoption of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Blog, libraries can provide users with new information through saved searches, and e-mail alerts.

With a view of the Covid 19 pandemic lockdown, library users can also be informed of the library's new innovations and updated services. Users can check the loans and also know of the availability of any particular services or book by sending SMS (Abdulsalami & Dika, 2019). By adopting social media tools, readers can subscribe to receive library notices via email, library newsletters and can also subscribe to online databases. Libraries can broadcast text messages to groups of clients for promoting services such as new databases, extended library opening hours, or a new series of hands-on workshops (Abdulsalami & Dika, 2019). It is worthy of

note that the adoption of social media and social networking applications such as Zoom, GoogleMeet, Group discussion using Facebook Live, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram among others can serve as a useful communication link to relate users on emerging library services. If the situation persists and lockdown is brought back, using social media tools for delivering library services will be a better option.

The use of social media platforms on library services according to Otulugbu (2019) will ensure that library personnel are also increasingly reaching out to their clientele via the social Web by communicating messages about existing print and online resources as well as to render reference services such as SDI, CAS, sharing of images/photographs, facilitation of literacy skills and library education. Friday, Oluchi and Ngozi (2020) stresses that, poor skills of library staff in the use of social media tools and lack of funds may have played host to the myriad of problems for libraries in adopting social media tools in their service delivery. Therefore, Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) emphasizes that the present economic scenario where libraries are constantly experiencing dwindled budgets, has left libraries with no option than to incorporate social media as a subtle means of serving patrons in a more specialized, interactive and value-added manner without incurring undue expenses. It is against this backdrop that this study aims to assess the social media platforms and effective library services delivery in covid-19 era in Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess the social media platforms and effective library services delivery in covid-19 era in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

i.identify the available social media platform that disseminate information during COVID-19 era.
ii.examine the extent to which social media platforms disseminated information effectively during COVID-19 era.
iii.examine the frequency of using social media tools during COVID-19 era
iv.examine the influence of social media on library services during COVID-19 era.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

i.What were the available social media platforms that disseminate information during COVID-19 era?
ii.To what extent did social media platforms disseminate information effectively during COVID-19 era?
iii.How often were social media platforms utilized during COVID-19 era?
iv.What were the influences of social media on library services during COVID-19 era?

Methodology

The research adopted a descriptive survey design. The area of the study includes the two public universities in Benue State (Joseph Saawuan Tarka University Makurdi and Benue State University Maakurdi). The population of the study comprises of the total number of library staff from the two selected universities in Benue State. A simple random sampling technique was employed. The sample size for the study was 10 from each selected university, giving a total sample size of 20 respondents. The instrument used for this study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was titled Social Media Platforms and Effective Library Services Delivery in COVID-19 Era Questionnaire (SMPELSDCEQ). The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient for a measure of internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability coefficient achieved was 0.77. The instrument was administered personally to the respondents by the researchers. In other to minimize loss of questionnaire, all completed copies of questionnaire were collected on the spot. Mean was used to analyze the research questions. Mean scores of < 4.00 was rejected while mean scores ≥ 4.00 was accepted.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Questions 1: What were the available social media platforms that disseminated information during COVID-19 era?

Table 1. Mean Responses of Respondents on the Available Social Media Platform that Disseminated Information duringCOVID-19 Era

S/No	Item	Responses				$\bar{X}$	Decision
		SA	A	D	SD		
1	Facebook	16	4	-	-	5.00	Agree
2	Twitter	12	8	-	-	5.00	Agree
3	Blog	10	10	-	-	5.00	Agree
4	WhatsApp	8	10	-	-	4.50	Agree
5	YouTube	8	8	2	-	4.50	Agree
6	MySpace	6	6	4	-	4.00	Agree
7	Linkedin	5	4	6	2	4.25	Agree
8	Wikis	4	6	5	3	4.50	Agree

Table 1 shows mean response of the available social media platforms that disseminated information during COVID-19 era. From table 1 the respondents indicated that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8were available social media platforms that disseminated information during COVID-19 era in Nigeria. In essence, all the items were identified by respondents as the available social media platform that disseminated information during COVID-19 era.

Questions 2: To what extent did social media platforms disseminate information effectively during COVID-19 era?

Table 2: Mean Responses of Respondents on the Extent to which Social Media Platforms Disseminated Information Effectively During COVID-19 era

S/No	Item	Responses				$\bar{X}$	Decision
		VHE	HE	LE	VLE		
9	Facebook	16	3	1	0	5.00	Agree
10	Twitter	12	4	2	0	4.50	Agree
11	Blog	10	6	2	0	4.50	Agree
12	WhatsApp	4	6	4	2	4.00	Agree
13	YouTube	4	6	2	4	4.00	Agree
14	MySpace	2	6	4	4	4.00	Agree
15	Linkedin	2	6	4	4	4.00	Agree
16	Wikis	0	4	6	6	4.00	Agree

Table 2 show mean responses of the extent to which social media platforms disseminated information effectively during COVID-19 era. Form table 2 the respondents indicated that items 9 (Facebook) disseminated information to a high extent during COVID-19 era. In this context, Facebook, as a social media platform, was identified by the respondents for disseminating information to the high extent.

Questions 3: How often was social media platform utilized during COVID-19 era?

Table 3. Mean responses of respondents on the frequencies of using social media tools during COVID-19 era

S/No	Item	Responses				$\bar{X}$	Decision
		Hourly	Daily	Weekly	Monthly		
17	Facebook	16	4	0	0	5.00	Agree
18	Twitter	6	12	2	0	5.00	Agree
19	Blog	6	10	0	0	4.00	Agree
20	WhatsApp	10	6	2	0	4.50	Agree
21	YouTube	6	10	0	0	4.00	Agree
22	MySpace	4	8	6	0	4.50	Agree
23	Linkedin	0	8	8	0	4.00	Agree
24	Wikis	0	6	6	4	4.00	Agee

Table 3 shows mean responses on the frequencies of using social media platforms during COVID-19 era in Nigeria. From the table the respondents indicated that 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 are the social media platforms that people used frequently (i.e.Hourly). Therefore, all the social media platforms were utilized by people every hour to access information during CoVID-19 era.

Question 4: What are the influences of social media on library services during COVID-19 era?

Table 4. Mean Responses of Respondents on the Influences of social media on Library Services during COVID-19 Era

S/No	Item	Responses				$\bar{X}$	Decision
		SA	A	D	SD		
25	Library have fan page on social media to enable them market the library's services and products						
26	Libraries had increased the use of social media platforms to connect, communicate as well as collaborate with patrons in an innovative way and providing the needed services during COVID-19 pandemic	10	8	2	0	5.00	Agree
27	Social media platforms help the libraries to relate to her wide patron even in remote areas.	10	8	2	0	5.00	Agree
	The lockdown placed by government due to COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and motivated libraries to adopt social media to service the library patron effectively.					4.50	Agree
28	Social media influence the library patrons to become library advocates and in turn promote library image within and outside the community.	8	8	2	0		
		6	8	2	0	4.00	Agree

Table 4 shows mean responses on the influence of social media platforms on library services during COVID-19 era in Nigeria. Form the table the respondents indicated that items 25, 26, 27 and 28were the influences of social media platforms on library services in COVID-19 era.

Discussion of Findings

On the available social media platforms that disseminated information during COVID-19 era in Nigeria, the study found that the social media platforms that disseminated information during COVID-19 pandemic are the Facebook, Twitter, whatsApp, Blog, MySpace, YouTube, LinkedIn and Wikis. This is in line with Ezeani and Igwesi, (2012) who stressed that social media tools, mostly MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Delicious, Flickr, Blogs, Wikis, Youtube, Podcasts, and Hi5 have enabled libraries to connect their users and allowed librarians to adopt a new role by placing themselves into a social realm with users.

On the extent to which social media platforms disseminated information during COVID-19 era in Nigeria, the study found that social media platforms disseminated information to a high extent. This is in agreement with Quadri and Idowu, (2016)who observed that social media is rapidly becoming the most preferred means of establishing social/professional networks among librarians. It is also being used to communicate with potential library users, as well as extending the information services to other remote users particularly in the academic community.

Finally, the study found that Social media influence the library patrons to become library advocates and in turn promote library image within and outside the community. The lockdown placed by government due to the Covid 19 pandemic has exposed and motivated libraries to adopt RSS feed, Facebook, Blog and Wiki to serve library patrons more effectively. Aharony (2009) revealed that library personnel can adopt of social media such as blog to post information related to professional, personal and both issues on the same platform.

CONCLUSION

The revenging nature of COVID-19 pandemic led to a mandatory lockdown on all sectors in Nigeria and across the globe, including libraries. The implementation of social media on library services became possible as a result of closure of schools. This augmented the efficacy of most libraries in the provision of library services to their patrons who were constrained to use the regular physical

library centres. Social media platforms such as Facebook, twitter, Blog, YouTube, LinkedIn, Delicious, MySpace and Flickr were adopted by libraries to disseminate information during the pandemic and this has improved the effectiveness and techniques with which the library relates to its patrons duringCOVID-19 era. Social media platforms that were applied in libraries served as platforms for information and knowledge dissemination and sharing. Thus, libraries need to do all that is possible to operate and maximize the benefits of these social media platforms to enhanced library service provision to their patrons.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations are made:

1. Safety measures should be put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Library staff should be provided with regular training in the use of new tools and social media platforms so that they can utilize these tools for effective library services delivery
3. Social media tools such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp videos and other media should be institutionalized in all libraries as this would extend their reach to users even in remote areas.
4. There should be adequate funding for libraries to enable them procure systems and application that would facilitate the use of social media tools in their library services
5. Users of the library needs to be trained in their use and access to relevant resources via their social media platforms since this is a new trend that requires skills in usage.

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