



USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR MARKETING INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN KATSINA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the use of social media for marketing information resources and services in university libraries in Katsina state. The study was guided by two research objective which include: to determine the type social media use for marketing information resources and services and to ascertain the challenges associated with the use of social media for marketing information resources and services. The study targeted all the eight digital librarians in Katsina university libraries. The study employed qualitative research method where interview schedules were used for data collection. The interview schedule was validated using audit inquiry and membership checking respondents. Furthermore, the data collected was analyze using thematic analysis. The study found that there are insufficient funds, lack of marketing strategies, training and constant power shortage. Conversely, the study recommends that libraries should seek additional funding to develop and maintain social media platforms, invest in training, and support marketing activities. Libraries need to create clear, strategic plans for marketing their resources via social media. This includes targeted content and regular engagement with users and among others

Keywords: Use of Social media, Information resources, Information services, Marketing information resources and Services

Introduction

The goal of any academic library is to provide information resources and services that cater to the needs of its users, including students, lecturers, and researchers. In today's digital age, social media plays an important role in marketing these resources and services. Social media, has gained significant popularity in recent years, has become a powerful tool for libraries to connect

with their audiences and promote library services (Kutu & Olajide, 2018). Social media as a communication tool with a wide range of websites enable individuals to interact and share content with others. Platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, WhatsApp, and Twitter allow libraries to reach broader communities, target specific audiences, and engage with library users directly. Tutel (2015) argues that social media serves as a mechanism for librarians to market library resources and services thus facilitating easy access to information. Libraries worldwide have embraced platforms like Gmail, Facebook, Wikis, Flickr, and blogs to market new resources and invite users to identify and select information relevant to their needs.

Libraries in developing countries, including Nigeria, have recognized the effectiveness of social media in reaching large audiences (Igbokare, 2019). Despite its widespread adoption, challenges remain in utilizing social media for marketing library services. These challenges include insufficient funding, lack of skilled personnel, and limited awareness of social media tools in many developing countries (Kutu & Olajide, 2018).

Globally, the use of social media in marketing library services has attracted scholarly attention. Studies have explored various approaches to utilizing social media for promoting library resources. Hendrix and Zafron (2019) highlight that Facebook is used by libraries to promote services and push out announcements. Libraries use photos and offer chat reference services to engage their audiences. According to a survey by the American Library Association (2011), most of the respondents considered social media important for promoting library services. Burkhardt (2019) emphasized traditional marketing tools such as flyers, posters, and event calendars but acknowledged that social media is increasingly being used to reach library patrons. Burkhardt (2019) reported that public libraries in the U.S. are leveraging social media platforms to engage patrons and promote library events. Furthermore, Jones and Harvey (2019) observed that despite challenges, libraries in the UK have adapted to the evolving technological landscape by incorporating social media into their marketing strategies. The advantages of

using social media for marketing library services include time savings and efficient fund management.

In developing countries such as Pakistan, Ahmad Khan and Bhatti (2018) found that social media is being used to enhance library marketing strategies. These platforms offer more than just traditional marketing avenues by connecting libraries with users in real-time. Similarly, Devi (2020) reported that in China, libraries use social media not only for accessing and using online resources but also to market these services to their users. The adoption of social media tools in libraries has been a key factor in bridging the gap between libraries and their users. However, the situation in countries like Bangladesh and Turkey differs, with many libraries still in the early stages of adopting social media for marketing purposes. In Pakistan, libraries have embraced social media to a greater extent, and users have shown a strong preference for these platforms to access and share information.

In the African context, several studies have examined the use of social media tools in marketing library services. Isibika and Kavishe (2018) studied the use of social media as a marketing tool for electronic resources in African countries (Kenya and Uganda). The study found that libraries in these countries face significant challenges in adopting social media, including inadequate funding, lack of skilled personnel, and insufficient awareness. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, Enang et al. (2021) reported that the lack of technical expertise among librarians has hindered the effective use of social media for marketing purposes.

In Nigeria, the application of social media in marketing library resources has faced similar challenges. Isibika and Kavishe (2018) highlighted that Nigerian libraries struggle with inadequate information skills and lack of funds, which hinder the effective use of social media tools for marketing library services. Despite these challenges, social media tools remain essential for meeting the library's goals of reaching and engaging users. As libraries continue to adapt to the digital age, the integration of social media into their marketing strategies

becomes more crucial in connecting with users and providing them with up-to-date resources and services.

Statement of the Problem:

University libraries in Katsina have not fully embraced social media as a tool to market their information resources and services, which limits their ability to effectively reach their target audience (Igbokare, 2019). The lack of social media use is a significant challenge in an age where digital platforms provide libraries with opportunities to promote their resources, interact with users, and share information quickly. Social media, as reported by Isibika and Kavishe (2018) and Enang et al. (2021), has the potential to bridge the gap between libraries and users in real-time. This study aims to explore which social media platforms are used by university libraries in Katsina to market their resources and services, examining how these platforms can improve engagement and service delivery.

Research objectives

The study aims:

1. To find out the different types of social media, use for marketing information resources and services in university libraries in Katsina state
2. To identify the challenges associated with the use of social media for marketing information resources and services in university libraries in Katsina state

Literature Review

Social media has transformed the way libraries market their information products and services. They are integral tools for academic libraries to engage their users and promote service delivery. Social media, as defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), are internet-based applications build on the principles of Web 2.0 and enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content. These platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram, provide libraries with opportunities to create virtual communities where users can engage with

content, ask questions, and receive updates on new services and resources (Kutu & Olajide, 2018).

Libraries across the world, including those in Nigeria, have begun to leverage social media to enhance their visibility and extend their reach. Igbokare (2019) emphasizes that university libraries in Nigeria can benefit from effectively marketing services using platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. These platforms allow for real-time interaction with library users, which helps increase engagement and awareness of available resources. In Nigeria, libraries use social media to promote events, new acquisitions, and workshops, creating a dynamic way to engage users who may not always visit in person (Igwela & Nsirim, 2018). For example, Facebook and Twitter are used to announce workshops and share library news, while YouTube provides an avenue for tutorials on using library resources (Igbokare, 2019).

However, despite the numerous benefits, challenges exist in utilizing social media in library marketing. As Isibika and Kavishe (2018) note, libraries often face limitations such as inadequate technology, insufficient staff training, and the lack of a coherent social media strategy. Moreover, technological infrastructure issues such as poor internet connectivity can hinder the effective use of social media in promoting library services (Enang, Ukpanah, & Umoren, 2021). These challenges may reduce the potential of social media to connect libraries with their target audience. According to Burkhardt (2019), a strong and consistent social media presence is essential for libraries to succeed in digital marketing, as it helps to establish the library as an accessible and contemporary institution.

Furthermore, Hendrix and Zafron (2019) observe that in U.S. academic health sciences libraries, social media platforms such as Facebook are used to engage users by sharing announcements and providing reference services. This practice of promoting library services via social media is also gaining momentum in Nigerian academic libraries, where mobile platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook are increasingly employed for real-time interactions

with users (Igwela & Nsirim, 2018). In line with these findings, Devi (2020) highlights that social networking sites are not just tools for engagement but also platforms for enhancing services delivery, research and distance learning. Social media offers a unique opportunity for library users to stay informed about library services and developments. As Buzzetto-Hollywood (2018) suggests, integrating social media into the library's marketing strategy provides numerous advantages, including a wider reach, increased interactivity, and more effective communication with users.

Despite these advantages, a range of challenges remains. According to Cheng, Lam, and Chiu (2020), libraries must overcome challenges of time constraints, continuous content updates, and the evolving digital platforms. Libraries should ensure that they remain adaptable and proactive to meet the needs of their users. In Nigeria, libraries still face challenges related to the application of social media for marketing purposes, lack of technological infrastructure, insufficient staff training, and lack of strategic planning for social media use in academic libraries (Adewoyin, Onuoha, & Ikonne, 2017).

Based on the review of related literature, it has been established that numerous studies have been conducted on the use of social media in libraries. However, this study distinguishes itself by specifically exploring the application of social media for marketing information resources and services within university libraries. The focus of the research is geographically centered on university libraries in Katsina State, Nigeria, making it a unique contribution to the existing body of knowledge. By examining how university libraries in this region use social media platforms for marketing their resources and services, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and potential of social media as a tool for outreach and engagement in academic settings. With the target of broadens the understanding of social media's role in library services but also highlights how it can be strategically used to enhance

the visibility and accessibility of information resources within university libraries in Katsina State.

Research Method

The study is on the use of social media for marketing information resources and services in university libraries in Katsina State and aimed to explore how social media platforms are utilized to promote library resources and services. Specifically, the study sought to (1) identify the various types of social media used for marketing in university libraries within Katsina State, and (2) examine the challenges encountered in using these platforms for such purposes. A phenomenological research design under the qualitative research method was employed to capture the lived experiences of digital librarians. The study targeted all digital librarians across the three university libraries in Katsina State, utilizing total enumeration sampling to include every eligible participant. An interview schedule was used for data collection, and its validity was ensured through audit inquiry and member checking by respondents. Data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis, which helped in identifying recurring patterns and themes related to the use and challenges of social media in the marketing of library services and resources.

Data Analysis

Type of social media use for marketing information resources and services

To determine the types of social media available, 8 participants were interviewed on the following types of social media which includes; Facebook, twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, wiki, blogs, WhatsApp, student e-mail and school portal.

Results from the interviews indicated that most of the participants (6? 75%) agreed with the opinions, that students/lecturers e-mail, school portal, WhatsApp and Facebooks are the type

social media use in the university libraries. The only exception were two participants who have varied opinions. In fact, one of the participants said that:

...library in this university does not have a specific type of social media tool that we may say that is always available for marketing but we may sometime use e-mail to communicate with the some of the users.

While the second participant expressed his views as in:

...Availability of social media for marketing is very rare in this library and what I can say about this issue is that social media is only available for interaction with colleagues through WhatsApp group for example for alerting or making new information to be informed.

1. Challenges associated with the use of social media for marketing information resources and services

To determine the challenges affecting the use of social media for marketing resources and services in Katsina state university libraries, 8 participants were interviewed on what are the challenges affecting the use of social media for marketing resources and services? Specifically, the results of the interview were coded by name and defined under the following themes which includes;

i. Insufficient Fund

The result from interviews with the participants indicated that inadequate funds for marketing of information resource and services is one of the challenges expressed. All the participants (8; 100%) interviewed indicated that inadequate funds for marketing of information resources and services. One of the participants noted:

The major problem is that of inadequate funds, inadequate training facilities, and marketing skills. He stressed that poor workshops and seminar experiences on marketing strategies.

However, the second participant noted that:

There is insufficient fund to maximally market the resources and services rendered in the library.

ii. *Lack of good marketing strategies*

Majority of the participants (6; 85%) interviewed unanimously agreed that marketing strategy or skills is another challenge for the application of social media for marketing information resources and services in university libraries Katsina state. One of the participants narrated that:

One of the challenges in marketing information resources and services using social media is lack of marketing skills and poor patronage by the users.

While the other two participants expressed their opinions differently. One of the participants stated that:

There is lack of technical know-how to market information resources and services by the librarians and lack of motivation on the side of the users.

The other participant noted that:

The challenge in marketing information resources and services apart from inadequate funding is lack of specifying the staff responsible for such activities.

However, one of the participants with varied opinion said that

The challenges associated with the marketing information resources and services include poor incentives to the librarians who are expected to do the services

iii. *Lack of proper training and lack of constant power supply*

The result from interviews with the participants indicated that lack of proper training and lack of constant power supply. All the participants (8; 100%) interviewed indicated that lack of proper training and lack of constant power supply were another challenge for marketing information resources and services. One of the participants noted:

There is lack training on how we can market the library resources. This is as a result of no incentives will be given even if the seminar or workshop is to be carried out. At the same time, there is the issue of issue of power outage. Sometimes we may come to library with no constant or required time of power to be available.

Discussion of Findings

The main purpose of the study is to find the use of social media for marketing information resources and services in university libraries in Katsina state. Different types of social media used for marketing information resources: When asked about the types of social media used to market information resources in Katsina State University Libraries, the study revealed that several social media platforms are being utilized. Most of the libraries in the study area primarily use students' and lecturers' e-mail accounts as a medium for communication. This finding is consistent with the research of Kutu and Olajide (2018), who found that student e-mail was commonly used to market library resources, followed by WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Plus, Snapchat, and Skype. However, this study contrasts with the findings of Okoroma (2017), who reported that Facebook, blogs, Flickr, WordPress, Twitter, Livestream, and MySpace were the main platforms used for marketing library resources.

In addition, to determine the challenges affecting the use of social media for marketing resources and services in Katsina State University Libraries: The study identified several challenges hindering the effective use of social media for marketing library resources and services, including insufficient funds, lack of proper marketing strategies, inadequate training, and unreliable power supply. This finding differs from the research conducted by Devi (2020), who highlighted challenges such as addiction, time-wasting, lack of incentives, erratic phone charging, bandwidth and network issues, social media-related sleeplessness, and technophobia among students using social media for library services. Similarly, Buzzetto-Hollywood (2018) found that financial constraints and a lack of training for both library staff and students were the primary barriers to the effective use of social media tools in library marketing.

Conclusions

The study reveals that social media is increasingly being utilized in Katsina State University Libraries to market information resources and services, with platforms such as student/lecturer

emails, WhatsApp, Facebook, and school portals being the most employed. However, challenges such as insufficient funding, lack of effective marketing strategies, inadequate training, and unreliable power supply hinder the optimal use of these platforms. Solutions proposed by the participants include securing adequate funding, implementing robust marketing strategies, providing proper training, and ensuring a stable power supply. These findings align with broader research, but some discrepancies exist in the suggested solutions. For libraries to fully harness the power of social media for marketing, overcoming these challenges is crucial.

Recommendations

The study offered the following recommendations:

1. To effectively utilize social media for marketing library resources and services, university libraries must secure adequate funding. This funding should be directed toward building and maintaining robust social media accounts, acquiring the necessary digital tools and software, and implementing campaigns that promote library services. Additionally, funds are essential for staff development training librarians in digital marketing strategies, content creation, and user engagement. By investing in these areas, libraries can strengthen their online presence, attract more users, and enhance access to their resources.
2. A well-structured marketing strategy is essential for successful social media use. Libraries should develop clear goals, identify their target audience (e.g., students, researchers, or faculty), and design tailored content that meets their information needs. Strategic planning should also involve setting up content calendars, choosing the appropriate platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram), and ensuring consistent and timely engagement. Regular interaction with users through posts,

responses to queries, and promotional campaigns can increase visibility, build trust, and encourage the use of library services.

3. Libraries should prioritize continuous training for staff on social media marketing, as well as work towards securing stable power supply to ensure uninterrupted access to digital resources and platforms: Ongoing training is vital to keep library staff updated on evolving trends, tools, and techniques in social media marketing. This includes workshops, webinars, and professional development courses that enhance their digital communication skills. Equally important is addressing infrastructural challenges, particularly the issue of unstable electricity supply, which can hinder consistent online engagement. Libraries should collaborate with institutional management and government bodies to improve power access, or explore alternative energy sources like solar systems, to ensure uninterrupted connectivity and access to digital platforms. This will help maintain a reliable online presence and support continuous service delivery

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