

ABSTRACT

Background: Emerging technologies have transformed the globe and brought significant changes in information delivery in this century. One key change is the adoption of social media, an innovation redefining information provision. Many medical libraries in advanced countries are incorporating social media for service delivery. Literature has not given much attention to the use of social media in medical libraries in Nigeria. Thus, this paper explored the use and applications of social media among medical library staff in Nigeria.

Methods: The study adopted a survey research design. The population comprised medical library staff in Nigeria. A questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The total enumeration technique was used to cover all the medical library staff in Nigeria. A total of 54 medical library staff responded to the survey.

Results: The results showed that WhatsApp was the most popular social media tool used, followed by Google, Facebook, and Instant messaging. The results also revealed that reference services, user orientation, and current awareness were some of the services delivered using social media. Poor internet access, lack of management support, and erratic power supply were some of the constraints.

Conclusion: The paper concluded that many medical library staff have embraced social media. However, it seems they have not adequately maximised these media in the delivery of library and information services. More awareness should be created about the use of social media, such as wikis and blogs, for information services delivery. The challenges in using social media should be addressed.

¹*Corresponding author: Library and ICT Department, Nigerian Institute of Medical Research, Lagos, Nigeria | oo.adewoyin@nimr.gov.ng | <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0997-7515>

²Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Lagos, Nigeria

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Introduction

Traditionally, libraries provide various services such as reference, circulation, inter-library loans, photocopying, referral, translation and current awareness to users. Thus, service delivery is the primary role of every library and must be performed to meet the needs of all library user groups (Popoola et al., 2020). It entails information provision and dissemination to library patrons. Before the emergence of modern technologies, the traditional manual systems were the only ways library services were delivered. However, in this 21st century, the traditional means of information provision and dissemination are no longer adequate and effective (Omeluzor et al., 2016).

Integrating emerging technologies in information provision and dissemination is increasing the role of librarians as information specialists. This requires the use of modern tools in the delivery of library services (Omeluzor et al., 2020). Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have transformed the globe and changed information delivery significantly in this century. One key change is adopting social media, an innovation redefining information provision. Leveraging social media has increased the delivery of existing library services (Omodele, 2021).

Moreover, the emergency of the deadly coronavirus disease (COVID-19) that crippled activities across the globe has shown the urgent need for medical library staff to embrace and incorporate alternative methods of delivering information services via social media. Ogunbeni et al. (2021) posit that COVID-19 has necessitated the need for academic libraries in Nigeria to do more by embracing ICTs for information access. Medical library staff need to take advantage of new technologies, such as social

media, as they can be used to respond to the rising information needs of users.

Umaru and Omame (2020) considered social media as platforms where individuals and organizations can build social relationships among like-minded people with similar interests or pursuits. Budu et al. (2020) assert that social media allow people to share information, opinions, or interests and network through modern technologies. Social media have significantly influenced academic libraries in Sub-Saharan, especially in marketing libraries and information services. Alonge (2012) opined that social media are technologies that enable the sharing of ideas, views and information online.

Mogale and Bopape (2023) note that many institutions have embraced the media since the advent of social media. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and YouTube are used as communication platforms to mobilise people to support a cause. Gülsoyet al. (2022) submit that Twitter (Now known as X) is a microblogging and social networking platform that allows users to follow those who have similar interests and gain knowledge. According to them, it allows the sharing of ideas and information via text messages called tweets limited to 280 characters.

However, despite the opportunities that social media presents to libraries, little is known about their use for service delivery in medical libraries in South-West Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that this study investigated the use and applications of social media for service delivery among medical library staff in Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study was to investigate the usage and applications of social media for service delivery among medical library staff in Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives are to:

1. 1. determine how often social media are used for service delivery among medical library staff in Nigeria,

2. 2. explore the extent to which medical library staff in Nigeria deliver services using social media,
3. 3. identify the challenges that medical library staff in Nigeria face when using social media for service delivery.

Literature Review

Social media are tools that allow users to relate and communicate online. Akporhonor and Olise (2015) opine that librarians need to have a social media presence using platforms like Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, blogs, and other microblogging sites if they want to stay in constant contact with their users and enhance the satisfaction of their users. Social media allows libraries to reach many users and provide effective services on time. Thus, social media are inevitable (Nduka et al., 2021). Omini, Osulale and Ayanlade (2018) state that social media have evolved over the years and are beneficial for the promotion of information resources and services and for quick response by library users. According to them, social media helps libraries and their users to promote library services.

The study by Rabatseta et al. (2021) reported that academic libraries in South Africa have embraced social media. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs were the preferred platforms. Facebook was the most popular platform in these libraries. The study also found that these tools were mostly used to promote library services. Additionally, they noted that social media platforms were used to interact with library users, for reference services, and to connect with other libraries. Mogale and Bopape (2023) found that the librarians used the library blog and Facebook to market and promote library services and to communicate with their users. Factors such as limitations of access to social media platforms, lack of skills, lack of social media policy and lack of management support in the form of training were among the constraints to social media use.

Nduka, Adekanye and Adedokun (2021) conducted a study to explore social media use among library and information professionals in Nigeria and the challenges these professionals encountered when

using social media. The study revealed that most respondents were aware of social media use, and social network tools were highly used. The key challenges faced in using social media included inadequate power supply, lack of Internet access and time constraints.

The study by Ahenkorah-Marfo (2015) showed that most of the librarians were aware of and used social media. Nonetheless, they did not have the skills to use social media tools in service delivery. Although the respondents were aware of social media, they found the traditional mode of service delivery more convenient. The challenges they faced, among others, were a lack of interest and skill on the part of librarians, low bandwidth and poor internet connectivity, and a lack of policy to guide social media application usage in libraries.

Ogunbodede and Ivwighrehweta (2020) explored the use of social media for library service delivery in university libraries in Nigeria. The results showed that most of the respondents used Facebook and WhatsApp to provide library services. They used social media to create awareness about library resources and services and to share library news and events. The two major challenges were poor internet connection and lack of constant power supply. The study by Omeluzo et al. (2016) showed that some of the respondents used social media for delivery of library services. Some of the challenges were erratic power supply, inadequate skill to manipulate social networking and other ICT tools, technophobia, lack of awareness, insufficient bandwidth, apathy in using modern technologies and lack of internet connection.

Furthermore, Kirita and Mwantimwa (2021) examined the use of social media in marketing library resources and services. The results indicated that Facebook was the most used by the respondents. Lack of a written policy for social media usage, unreliable internet connectivity, low promotion, content obsolescence, and inadequate computer facilities were some of the challenges. Ayu and Abrizah (2011) studied the usage and application of Facebook among Malaysian academic libraries. The findings showed that only three libraries were fully utilizing their Facebook

page. Similarly, Hendrix et al. (2009) found that Facebook was used mostly to market the library, push out announcements to library users, post photos, provide chat reference, and have a presence in the social network. Hazidah and Mohd (2013) examined the implementation of Web 2.0 applications. The findings showed that Facebook, Twitter, RSS and Messenger were used. However, Wiki was hardly used.

Similarly, Atulomah and Onuoha (2011) found that Facebook, followed by LinkedIn, was used effectively to promote librarianship. Twitter was rarely used. Akporhonor and Olise (2015) found that blogs and Facebook were the most commonly used to promote library and information resources and services in libraries. The study also revealed that social media use by the respondents facilitates communication with library users. Ejitagha and Ivwighrehweta (2021) examined librarians' use of social media to promote library resources and services. The findings showed that most of the respondents used Facebook and WhatsApp.

The study by Arumugam and Balasubramani (2019) showed that the respondents preferred Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The social media were used for activities such as knowledge sharing and book reviews. The study by Omini, Osuolale, and Ayanlade (2018) showed that Facebook and blogs were the most frequently used social media platforms for promoting library resources and services in libraries. The study also revealed that librarians utilized social media to facilitate communication, make connections with library users, provide a forum for feedback and increase library usage. Arif and Mahmood (2012) found that instant messaging was the Web 2.0 technology that was used by most of the respondents, followed by social networking. Blogs and wikis were also used. However, RSS and podcasting were hardly used.

Methodology

The study adopted the cross-sectional survey research design to explore social media usage among medical library staff in Nigeria. A questionnaire was designed and administered using Google Forms. A link to the survey was sent

to the staff using the WhatsApp Group of the Medical Library Association of Nigeria. The survey had sections such as demographic information of the respondents, frequency of social media use for service delivery, extent to which services are delivered using social media and challenges to using social media for service. A total of 54 medical library staff responded to the survey. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as tables, frequency distribution, and percentages.

Results

The respondents' demography is shown in Table 1. 31 (57.4%) of the respondents were males while 23 (42.6%) were females. A total of 28 (51.9%) are in the age range of 41-50 years. This suggests that more than half of the respondents were 41-50 years old. The results also showed that 12 (22.2%) and 27 (50%) were BLS and MLS/MLIS degree holders, respectively, while one (1.9%) had an MPhil, and 9 (16.7%) were PhD holders.

Table 2 reveals the frequency of social media use by medical library personnel in Nigeria. About 44% of the respondents used Facebook daily. Wiki and Twitter were used occasionally by 53.7% and 48.1% of respondents, respectively. WhatsApp recorded the highest daily usage (81%).

Table 1: Demographic information of the Respondents

<i>Gender</i>		
	f	%
Male	31	57.4
Female	23	42.6
Total	54	100
<i>Age group</i>		
21-30yrs	1	1.9
31-40yrs	10	18.5
41-50yrs	28	51.9
51-60yrs	14	25.9
61 & above	1	1.9
TOTAL	54	100
<i>Highest Academic qualification obtained</i>		
BLS	12	22.2
MLS/MLIS	27	50.0
MPHIL	1	1.9
PhD	9	16.7
Others	5	9.5
Total	54	100.0
<i>Years of working experience</i>		
Below 5 years	3	5.6
6-10 years	9	16.7
11-15 years	16	29.6
16-20 years	13	24.1
21-25 years	4	7.4
Above 25 years	9	19.1
Total	54	100.0

Table 2 Frequency of Social Media Use for Service Delivery

<i>Social media</i>	<i>Frequency of use</i>			
	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Never</i>
Facebook	24 (44.4%)	6 (11.1%)	16 (29.6%)	8 (14.8%)
Wiki	4 (7.4%)	11 (20.4%)	29 (53.7%)	10 (18.5%)
Twitter	8 (14.8%)	10 (18.5%)	26 (48.1%)	10 (18.5%)
Instant Messaging (IM)	24 (44.4%)	9 (16.7%)	14 (25.9%)	7 (12.10%)
Ask a Librarian	18 (33.3%)	10 (18.5%)	15 (27.8%)	11 (22.4%)
Blogs	7 (12.10%)	7 (12.10%)	27 (50%)	13 (24.1%)
You Tube	15 (27.8%)	9 (16.7%)	25 (46.3%)	5 (9.3%)
WhatsApp	44 (81.5%)	8 (14.8%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)

Table 3: Extent of services delivered using social media

<i>Types of services</i>	<i>Great extent</i>	<i>Moderate extent</i>	<i>Low extent</i>	<i>Never</i>
Reference services	33 (61.1%)	17 (31.5%)	3 (5.6%)	1 (1.9%)
Ask a librarian /Online chat	25 (46.3%)	18 (33.3%)	10 (18.5%)	1 (1.9%)
Network with other libraries	13 (24.1%)	25 (46.3%)	15 (27.8%)	1 (1.9%)
Electronic document delivery	22 (40.7%)	25 (46.3%)	7 (12.10%)	0 (0%)
Overdue reminders	17 (31.5%)	14 (25.9%)	17 (31.5%)	6 (11.1%)
Current awareness	32 (59.3%)	14 (25.9%)	8 (14.8%)	0 (0%)
Posting of library events	23 (42.6%)	19 (35.2%)	12 (22.2%)	0 (0%)
Information literacy skills	19 (35.2%)	22 (40.7%)	13 (24.1%)	0 (0%)
User orientation	33 (61.1%)	13 (24.1%)	8 (14.8%)	0 (0%)
Alerts	19 (35.2%)	17(31.5%)	12 (22.2%)	6 (11.1%)

Table 3 shows the extent to which library services were delivered using social media. The table indicates that social media were used to a 'great extent' for reference services (61.1%), user orientation (61.1%) and current awareness services (59.3%), respectively.

Table 4: challenges to the use of social media for service delivery

<i>Constraints in using social media for service delivery</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
Inadequate social media skills	5 (9.3%)	11 (20.1%)	28 (51.9%)	10 (18.5%)
Inadequate ICT facilities in the library	13 (24.1%)	16 (29.6%)	16 (29.6%)	9 (16.7%)
Lack of management support	17 (31.5%)	19 (35.2%)	13 (24.1%)	5 (9.3%)
Poor Internet access	23 (42.6%)	14 (25.9%)	8 (14.8%)	9 (16.7%)
Lack of awareness of social media tools	9 (16.7%)	11 (20.1%)	25 (46.3%)	9 (16.7%)
Erratic power supply	17 (31.5%)	16 (29.6%)	15 (27.8%)	6 (11.1%)
Lack of cooperation among library staff	4 (7.4%)	16 (29.6%)	27 (50%)	7 (12.9%)
Lack of interest in using social media for library services	8 (14.8%)	11 (20.1%)	27 (50%)	8 (14.8%)
No feedback from users	9 (16.7%)	17 (31.5%)	23 (42.6%)	5 (9.3%)

Table 4 reveals the challenges encountered by library staff in using social media tools for service delivery. Respondents were asked to indicate the challenges in using social media tools, more than half (51.9%) disagreed that inadequate social media skills was a challenge. Poor Internet access (42.6%), lack of management support (31.5%) and erratic power supply (35.1%) were challenges to social media use for service delivery.

Discussion

The study investigated the usage and applications of social media for service delivery among medical library staff in Nigeria. The result revealed that WhatsApp was the social media that was frequently used by most of the respondents. This implies that WhatsApp has been embraced as a social media tool by medical library staff. This could be attributed to ease of use, immediate feedback, and the opportunity to reach a broad audience (Adomi & Solomon-Uwakwe, 2019). The findings contradict

Ogunbodede and Ivwighreghweta (2020), who found that their respondents mostly used Facebook. The results also contradict the findings of the study conducted by Rabatseta et al. (2021), who found that Facebook was the most popular platform used by academic libraries in South Africa.

The study revealed that most respondents used social media for reference services, user orientation, and current awareness services. The findings concur with those of Uwandu and Osuji (2022), whose study revealed that the respondents mostly used social media for reference services. This implies that social media have enhanced the provision of reference services. Library users can interact with the reference librarian remotely. Social media have removed barriers to information provision and dissemination. These findings partly agree with Asuquo, Aliu, and Mbah (2023), who found that the services rendered by library staff using social media included current awareness services, display of new arrivals, reference service, posting of library and institution's events, overdue reminder user education, document delivery service and reservation service.

More than half of the respondents agreed that poor Internet access, lack of management support, and erratic power supply were the challenges facing the use of social media for service delivery. These findings partly support Ogunbodede and Ivwighreghweta (2020), who found that the majority of the respondents indicated that poor internet connection and lack of constant power supply were the two major challenges to the effective use of social media platforms.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of the study suggested that medical library staff have embraced social media. However, they have not maximised these media in the delivery of library and information services. The study recommends that medical libraries fully embrace social media. Health institutions need to adequately equip their libraries with modern technologies. Medical library staff must maximise social media to enhance information provision and dissemination. Medical libraries can integrate social

media to reach out to their users irrespective of their geographical location. Medical library staff must move with the trend by using social media to provide services. More awareness should be created on the use of social media such as wikis and blogs.

Limitation of the study

One limitation of this study is the small sample size due to low response from the respondents despite the researchers' efforts.

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