
Users' Satisfaction, Social Media Engagement, and Service Delivery by Librarians in Nigerian Polytechnics

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Abstract

As social media continues to revolutionize the way we interact and access information, librarians must adapt to meet the evolving needs of their users. This paper argues that social media is a crucial tool for librarians to enhance users' satisfaction and improve service delivery. By engaging with users on social media platforms, librarians can foster a sense of community, provide timely support, and promote library resources and services. The paper explores the benefits of social media engagement for librarians, including increased user satisfaction, improved service delivery, and enhanced professional development. The paper revealed that social media engagement has a positive impact on service delivery because it allows for easier interaction between information seekers and librarians. It further revealed that social media engagement offers an open avenue for librarians to inform library users about new arrivals, library activities and programs. Ultimately, this paper contends that social media is an essential component of modern librarianship, and that librarians must prioritize social media engagement to remain relevant and effective in the digital age. By frequently engaging with users on social media, many of those who have been indifferent to library use could be won. Moreover, through sharing their expertise and experiences on social media, librarians can position themselves as trusted information professionals, and provide value added services to their users in new and innovative ways.

Keywords: user satisfaction, social media, Engagement, Service delivery, Librarians, Polytechnics

Introduction

The academic librarians in polytechnics as in other tertiary institutions are saddled with the responsibility of acquiring relevant information resources that are suitable for meeting and satisfying the information needs of every member of their academic community such as the students, lecturers, researchers and staff. According to Ajayi, Ayodele & Adedokun (2021) the central focus of academic libraries in institutions of higher learning is the provision of required

information resources and services to members of the institution's community. It is pertinent to state that the advent of information communication and technology (ICT) has led to information explosion and increase in the rate of information needs and consumption by every individual. Unlike in the past, when every information seeker rushed to the library to satisfy their information needs, in 21st century, there are lots of avenues through which information seekers could access needed information, such as leveraging on mobile technology devices to access information from Google, AI, social media platforms, etc.

Basically, the librarians owe it a duty to ensure that library users are provided with quality information resources and services that would make them feel satisfied with services provided. In the context of the library, user's satisfaction is the well-being, degree of satisfaction and comfort experienced by the patrons or users in relation to the products and services they are offered by the library. As a statement of fact, the survival of any service providing organization is dependent on the level of satisfaction of her customers with the services provided. Therefore, the academic librarians should make library users' satisfaction a top priority because information seekers in ICT age have various alternative information providers to fall back to. Therefore, the main focus of librarians in the library should be how to improve on their services, meet the needs, and expectations of library patrons.

The outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic introduced a new dimension of service delivery approach to libraries across the globe. During that period, providing relevant information services to customers remotely became a matter of necessity, because of the lockdown of public places including the library. Since people needed constant information on how to survive the pandemic, providing information to enlighten the patrons remotely, through social media engagements, was adopted by librarians as essential strategy for survival. Social media engagement (SME) is the deliberate creating and sharing of information between a certain brand (product, resources or services), organization or establishment or individual with another person or group of persons on social media platforms.

Apart from the issue of Covid-19 pandemic, the digital era has ushered in a new dimension into library operations, in terms of acquisition, processing, storage and dissemination of information. It has offered librarians and information users' different options in carrying out library routine operations and accessing information with ease. Therefore, SME is an offshoot of ICT that offers the librarians opportunity to extend library services beyond the four walls of



the library to assist librarians to wooing users to the library and ensure their satisfaction with the products and services offered.

As a follow up, to be able to ensure user satisfaction, the librarians across the globe are now adopting social media platforms to interact with the library patrons, share useful information with them, and getting feedback on services provided through SME. SME as a new innovation helps librarians to measure the degree of users' responses to library's products and services. It provides an avenue to determine the quality of service delivered, and to measure users' satisfaction. Therefore, for librarians in polytechnics to strengthening their information provision, they need to employ digital technology approaches, such as SME strategy, through which clients as stakeholders could be reached remotely unhindered 24 hours a day. This paper presents the services delivered by the libraries and how these services could be strengthening through social media engagement.

One of the salient work of librarians is daily service delivery. Librarians render services to people of all backgrounds, cultures, feelings/emotions, talents, and personalities (Williams-Ilemobola, adetayo, Asiru & Ajayi, 2021). Adegoke (2021) gave the list of the expected services rendered by librarians to include digital library services, virtual reference services, 'ask a librarian' services, adaptive learning services (ALS), referral services, current awareness services, knowledge creation and digital humanity services, inter-library lending services, data services, data consultation services, publishing support services, digital scholarship services, makerspace services, reservation services, selective dissemination of information services, information resources lending services, translation services, photocopying services, and library instruction services. Others include indexing and abstracting, OPAC services, cataloguing and classification, collection development, bindery, Internet and e-mail services.

Academic libraries need to identify and understand the user's needs on a regular basis and develop strategies to fulfil those needs (Amarasekara & Marasingbe, 2020). The above assertion is a challenge to academic librarians to intensify efforts in meeting users' needs and ensure that they derive satisfaction with library products and services. In this digital age, one of the open avenues just gaining relevance among the librarians is Social Media Engagement (SME). SME offers an avenue for librarians to conduct a user survey to identify user's needs, ascertain information on behavior changes of the users to determine their level of satisfaction with library information resources and services.



The success of any library is based on the satisfaction of the information demands of its users. The effectiveness of library resources and services are evaluated to the level to which they are utilized (Abraham & Sabu, 2022). In this information age, academic libraries have a lot of challenges to confront and surmount in order to satisfy information needs of users, and remain one of the dominant key players in the information industry. The relevance and survival of librarians are being challenged by the emerging online information providers, the bloggers, multimedia products and services, document delivery service operators and a host of other strong competitors like Google, operating with high sophisticated technologically based equipment and whose innovations are steadily delivering information 24 hours remotely. This digital innovative way of service delivery is giving them competitive edge. Consequently, to remain relevant and gain users' confidence, the polytechnic librarians must do everything possible to enhance users' satisfaction in polytechnic libraries in this 21st century, leveraging on social media engagement, an appendage of digital technology.

Polytechnic libraries are an integral part of polytechnic system. They play important roles in supporting the teaching, learning and research objectives of their parent institutions, by acquiring and providing access to relevant information resources, in various nature for the use of their patrons (Madu & Buhari, 2022). The library in polytechnics is academic by type, and is established majorly to cater for the information needs of the students, lecturers, administrators, researchers and every other member of the academic community. The librarians in academic libraries function as information service delivery experts, who are expected to meeting the information needs of patrons in a unique and special way. This is to guarantee customer satisfaction. By definition, customer's satisfaction is a measure of how well the libraries information resources in terms of quality, content relevance, currency and the quality-of-service delivery in totality meet patrons' information needs.

Social media engagement offers the librarians in the 21st century an open opportunity to measure customers' satisfaction through their level of engagement with the librarians on the shared contents and the feedback received through their expressions of 'like, level of sharing contents with other users and the comments they make on the contents shared'. Low level of satisfaction by the patrons could generate complaints, negative information to the public and low patronage. Edom & Edom (2019) explained library services as assistance that a librarian provided to users in the form of assistance that enables clientele to get the information, he/she wants from the library. Hicks (2016) averred that service is often being regarded as the



fundamental value or basic competency for measuring librarian's ability by patrons because services received are the hallmark of measuring professionalism.

User's satisfaction is a reflection of the extent to which the expectations of library patrons have been met or exceeded. It is the total aggregate measure of how satisfied, contented or fulfilled library patrons are with the products and services provided to meet their needs. As pointed out by many scholars, user satisfaction is influenced by factors such as: usability, functionality, reliability, customer support, and overall user experience. Therefore, library users in the current digital dispensation expects to enjoy 24 hours unrestricted digital service at the comfort of their homes without necessarily visiting the four walls of the library. Ajayi, Ayodele & Adedokun (2021) averred that when a particular customer is satisfied with services received, such will be a harbinger of good news about the service provider to others. Social media engagement readily fit into the type of digital apparatus that could be harnessed to provide satisfactory services to library patrons. This accounts for the reasons many libraries across the globe are adopting social media engagement strategy, using social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Zoom, etc.

Social Media Engagement (SME) for Enhancing Users' Satisfaction

The LIS Profession faces a critical challenge in responding to the new demand of providing quality information services that are timely, unrestricted by distance and with high efficiency to satisfy the information needs of their clients and prospective users. In this age of information explosion and increase in information seeking and utilization, there are lots of information providers such as Google, AI and many others, who are operating with more sophisticated modern facilities and equipment that the academic libraries have to contend with in the information provision industry. To be able to remain relevant as one of the key information providers, and also be able to compete favourably with the others, the adoption of SME, which is one of the emerging digital technologies is indispensable to the librarians in polytechnic libraries. SME could be explained as mutual interactions and engagements between a content provider and the audience, which in the case of the library is the user or patron. The SME is a measure of how much the library users interacts with library's products and services as contents on social media tools, such as Facebook or Twitter with comments or expression of 'like' or 'share' such content with others.

Social media engagement is thriving in this digital age because social media is being embraced as one of the digital technology apparatuses that allows the sharing of ideas and information, including text and visuals, through virtual networks and communities. Social media engenders the transmission of user-generated content that lends itself to engagement via likes, shares, comments, and discussion. Social media tools provide a conducive and easier avenue for librarians to reaching library patrons and engaging with them 24 hours a day virtually. It makes it convenient for the shy types of librarians and patrons to freely and easily share and receive information respectively. Therefore, all the social media tools, such as Zoom, Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter have significant influence on librarians' service delivery. Social media is becoming more recognizable to LIS workers as a flexible platform to contact potential library users.

Social media engagement brings about two-way communication that draws library patrons to librarians and helps to create a sense of being appreciated and recognised as stakeholders in the minds of patrons. It builds a positive relationship between the librarians and library patrons to the extent that the patrons are actively involved in contributing to shared contents with likes, passing comments or sharing the original content posted by librarians with other users of such social media tool. This established relationship through social media engagement would in the long run, strengthening users' patronage of library products and services. This interaction makes audience feel involved, valued and it strengthens their connection to your brand.

In business circle, there is a common slogan that states 'Customers are always right'. Through engagement with library patrons and prospective users, librarians would be privileged to ascertain their information needs and gain insights into their preferences and opinions as to how better they feel that they could be served. Getting feedback frequently from the patrons is very germane. Such knowledge would help the library as an information provider to engaging in periodical review and evaluation of the quality of products and services, professional competence of personnel and relevance of strategy used to deliver products and services. Doing all these would result into improved service delivery.

Social media engagement offers the librarians an open opportunity to marketing library products and services, leveraging on social media networks. Haliso, Babalola & Ajayi (2023), pointed out that the adoption of social media is widespread across organisations, and that librarians must key into its use. They asserted that social media has proven to be an effective platform for interactive communication, information dissemination, promotion and marketing



of library collections, services and library events and for online customer service platform. The study carried out by Onuoha and Adetayo (2015) revealed that lecturers in private universities in South- West, Nigeria often engage with social media for accessing information and for carrying out research activities. Since libraries has avalanche of quality products and services to offer, there is need to engage the patrons extensively through social media tools. Social media engagement as a digital tool is basically more effective in promoting library services better than the traditional means because it gives an online opportunity for librarians to engage directly with their patrons.

To ensure that library patrons derive satisfaction from the library, academic librarians in Polytechnic libraries could offer digital reference service to them through SME to guarantee effective service delivery and to save patrons of the stress to visit the four walls of the library. Abdullahi, Hassan, Basaka & Dewa (2017), explained digital reference service as a network of expertise, intermediation and resources put at the disposal of a person seeking answers in an online environment, exploiting the potentials of web technologies. Digital reference provides a mechanism through which people have access to submit their queries online and get answers to them from librarians through some electronic devices without involving in one-on-one discussion nor via telephone.

Customer satisfaction is achieved by not merely providing the needed facilities, equipment and collections of a library. It also entails good programs carefully planned and executed by people who man them. Thus, the human sides who deliver these services are also a point to consider in evaluating customer satisfaction (Christobal, 2018). As explained by Christobal above, it is not enough for an academic library to have needed facilities in its collection. There is need to fashion out means through which users could be reached, which SME perfectly fit in to. Therefore, user satisfaction could be enhanced through SME with patrons in anticipation of the gratification they could derive from online one -on -one interaction. Dolan, Conduita, Fahy and Goodmana (2015) asserted that engagement with customers through social media, which possesses interactive properties, have the potential of transforming consumers from passive observers to active participants. They added that the value of entertaining media is embedded in its ability to fulfil user needs for escapism, hedonistic pleasure, aesthetic enjoyment and emotional release.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that by understanding the importance of user's satisfaction, social engagement, and service delivery, librarians can implement strategies to improve these areas, such as conducting regular feedback surveys, developing social media strategies, and providing virtual reference services. The paper identified social media engagement as a digital tool that fits into our current digital age, and through which librarians could have seamless easy access to library users. SME affords librarians open opportunity to get feedback from users about their needs, level of satisfaction with library products and services and how to serve them better. This invariably would result into improved service by librarians in the 21st century and enhance users' satisfaction. The paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of social media engagement in the 21st Century service delivery, and provides actionable insights for librarians, who are desirous of leveraging social media for improved service delivery in academic libraries. By achieving this goal, librarians can enhance the overall library experience, increase user's satisfaction, and contribute to the academic excellence of Nigerian polytechnics.

Recommendations

The paper gave the following recommendations:

1. Librarians in polytechnic libraries should be visibly present online and increase their level of engagement with users on social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and X (formerly Twitter). This should include providing users with resourceful and valuable information contents.
2. Polytechnic librarians should formulate SME team, who would strategies on improving their visibility on social media platforms, so as to help user community develop positive attitude to interact and engage with the academic librarians.
3. Since optimum utilization of the library is the joy of librarians, regular assessment of user satisfaction should be carried out by polytechnic librarians to ascertain areas where improvements are needed to be effected to ensure optimum service delivery.
4. They should ensure that library collections are relevant, up-to-date, and accessible in various formats to cater for diverse user needs.
5. Polytechnic librarians should collaborate with other libraries, institutions, or organisations to share resources, expertise, and best practices to enhance service delivery.
6. There is need for the librarians to develop mobile-friendly library services. This would ensure that library services such as online catalogs and databases, are accessible on mobile devices to cater for users increasing reliance on mobile phones.



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