

Social Media Use for Service Delivery in Academic Libraries

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ABSTRACT

Social Media (SM) is revolutionizing the provision of library and information service in developed countries with its requisite benefits. Hence, contemporary library services which are embedded with SM are user-centric and promote delivery of real-time library and information services which are crucial in supporting curriculum and research. The study is viewing the present knowledge about SM use in academic libraries in Nigeria and how it affects the provision of library services which is not to be constraint by time, means and location because of the ubiquitous nature of SM. Extant literature has shown that the two-way communication afforded by SM has the potential to create dynamic libraries that are constantly evolving in tandem with their users' changing needs and expectations. The study will be underpinned by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT) and Uses & Gratification Theory (U&G). TAM will address the SM use behaviour of academic librarians; IDT will discourse the innovation adoption rate of SM among academic librarians and students; while U&G will measure motivation and gratification factors of SM usage by academic librarians. Survey research method design will be adopted for the study. Data will be collected using both questionnaires and interviews. University librarians of the six universities will be interviewed, while questionnaires will be administered to other academic librarians and undergraduate students in the six selected universities. This study will be underpinned by the post-positivist world view, quantitative data will be analyzed using IBM SPSS while qualitative data from the interview schedules will be analyzed using thematic content analysis. The outcome from the study is expected to improve practice, inform policy, influence the academic community that the library resides and extend theory in the field of SM use in academic libraries based on a developing country context.

Keywords

Social Media; Academic Librarians; Academic Libraries; Technology Adoption; Technological Innovation; User Gratification

1. INTRODUCTION

Social Media (SM) is defined as computer based-mediated tools that allow people to create, share, or exchange information, career interests, ideas, videos, pictures in virtual communities and networks [1]. Kaplan and Haelin [2] categorise SM into Collaborative Tools (Wikipedia; Blog and Microblogs-Twitter); Content Communities (YouTube; Social Networking Sites-Facebook, LinkedIn, Google + and others).

Libraries in developed countries have undergone significant evolution from providing information services through purely traditional manual systems to embrace dynamic technologically driven systems such as SM [3]. Kai-Wah Chu and Du [4] for example, asserts that the use of SM by academic libraries has become the norm in Asia, North America and Europe. But the reverse is the case in Africa wherein SM is still at the infancy stage [5] [6] [7] [8]. Likewise, in a developing country like Nigeria [9] [10] there is a dearth of research on SM education, awareness, adoption and use in academic libraries [11]. Boyd and Ellison [12] argues that academic librarians can use SM to render a variety of library services and communicate with 21st-century clientele. This goes a long way in encouraging their clientele's passion for the library and its offerings [13]. Witte [14] refer to the transformation brought about by SM in providing library services managed by SM as the 'humanization' of libraries. Just like in the developed world, the use of SM in the transformation and delivery of library and information services, in developing countries, including African nations such as Nigeria need not be emphasized. Simply because SM promotes the provision of user-centric library and information services in a dynamic way from anywhere, anytime and in many ways [7]. Okonedo, Azubuike and Adeyoyin [18] claims that the use of SM in libraries increases reference services, marketing, selective dissemination of information (SDI), creating library awareness, document delivery, information literacy, research and training, collaboration, and user services among others. Miller and Jensen [19] suggests that if academic libraries are to continue to be relevant and serve their users, they must be ready to embrace SM; and this includes African academic libraries. Otherwise, the users will bypass processes and institutions that they perceive to be slow, unresponsive, unappealing and irrelevant in favor of a more direct approach to services offered by others that just might be "good enough" for what they need to do. For instance, the laggard status of academic libraries in Nigeria in adopting and using SM in the provision of library and information services can be attributed to some factors such as the lack of awareness, poor infrastructure and lack of research on the use of SM [9]. In this regard, research is needed to gain a deeper understanding of how SM can be deploy in providing library and information services in Nigeria [11]. For such reasons that this research study seeks to investigate the adoption and use of SM for the provision of library and information services in academic libraries in South-West, Nigeria. This study is motivated by the fact that SM adoption and its use in academic libraries in Nigeria has not been embraced to a large extent in providing library and information services. Olajide and Oyeniran [20] also affirms that more than half of academic librarians in Nigeria are yet to have in-depth knowledge of SM.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The essence of academic libraries is to provide library services to the university community and the society at large. There is, therefore, the need for such library services targeted at the 21st-century clientele to be seamless and efficient [21]. Contemporary library services which are embedded with SM are user-centric and promote delivery of real-time library and information services which are crucial in supporting curriculum and research. The majority of the studies reviewed has shown that this model of service delivery has been adopted and being used in developed countries with its requisite benefits. But the reverse is the case in Africa wherein SM is still at the infancy stage [8] and in a developing country like Nigeria [9] where there is a dearth of research on SM awareness, education, adoption and use in academic libraries. The preceding reveals a considerable gap in the present knowledge about SM adoption and use in academic libraries in Nigeria and how it affects the provision of library services which is not to be constraint by time, means and location because of the ubiquitous nature of SMs. This is a lacuna that the present study intends to fill. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate the adoption and use of SM in the provision of library and information services in academic libraries in the South-West, Nigeria.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What is the level of awareness, adoption and use of SM by academic librarians for service delivery?
2. What are the perceived and actual benefits of using SM in service delivery in academic libraries?
3. What are the factors influencing the adoption and use of SM for service delivery in academic libraries?
4. How does perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, relative advantage, image, visibility, result demonstrability, gratification and motivation influence SM use behaviour of academic librarians for service delivery?
5. What institutional mechanisms are used to promote the use of SM for service delivery in academic libraries?

4. HYPOTHESIS

The following hypothesis will be tested at 0.05 significant levels:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between SM awareness and use behaviour of academic librarians for service delivery

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between (perceived and actual benefits) and use behaviour of academic librarians for service delivery

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between SM use behaviour of academic librarians and their professional development

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between relative advantage, image, visibility, result demonstrability and SM use behaviour of academic librarians' service delivery

H₀₅: There is no significant relationship between perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and SM use behaviour of academic librarians in service delivery

H₀₆: There is no significant relationship between specific motivation/gratification and SM use behaviour of academic librarians in service delivery

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

Extant literatures have shown that most conferences, seminars and workshops in 21st-century librarianship is tailored toward ensuring that academic librarians become experts in the use of SM in the provision of real-time library services to clientele. Thereby transforming traditional academic librarians to "Social Media Librarians" [21] [22] [23]. Hence, these academic librarians see to the day-to-day application of these technologies in the provision of real-time library and information services to library clientele which is not constraint by time, location and means because of the pervasive nature of SMs. The forgoing thereby makes academic librarians better equipped to provide effectual library services using SM leading to a knowledge based and information enhanced academic community. Also, the two-way communication afforded by these technologies can create dynamic academic libraries that are constantly evolving in tandem with their users' changing needs and expectations if backed up by suitable policies. Therefore, this study will help in catalyzing the development of a national policy framework on SMs which would provide a standardized roadmap for the adoption and use of SM in academic libraries in Nigeria. The study is expected to inform theory by combining three theories (Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT); Technology Acceptance Model (TAM); and Uses & Gratification Theory (U&G)) to reveal new insights into technology adoption and acceptance. TAM will address SM use behavior of academic librarians via TAM constructs (Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use). The study will also inform Practice by providing useful information on incorporating SMs into the provision of library services in academic libraries in Nigeria for efficient and quality library services.

6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

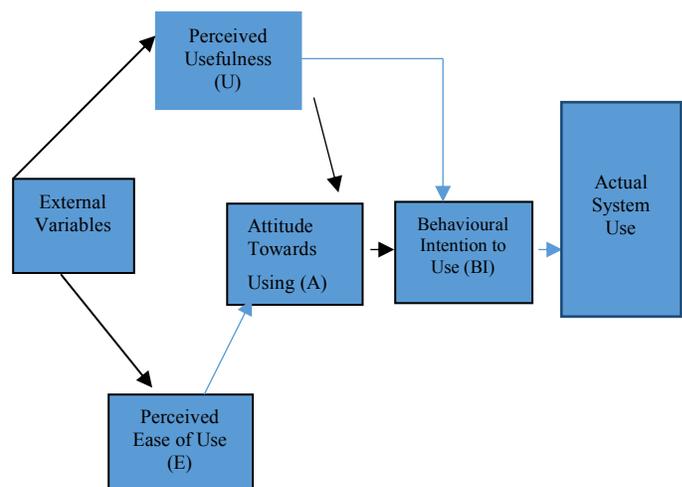


Figure 1: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Many empirical studies recommends integrating TAM with other theories such as IDT to improve specificity and explanatory power [24] [25]. Wixom and Todd [26] affirms that TAM is also a simple model that can be modified or extended in various directions and, therefore, many extensions integrating other theories like IDT have appeared in the literature which has given TAM the empirical

support in Information Technology/Information System research. The innovation adoption rate of SM among academic librarians will be addressed by IDT constructs (Relative Advantage, Image, Visibility, and Result Demonstrability). Zhang, Guo and Chen [27] noted that IDT should also be combined with other theoretical models like TAM because models directly based on IDT often produce unsatisfactory results in the empirical test. Venkatesh and Davis [28] observes that the high correlations between the different factors of IDT might account for the poor empirical performance of the model when used alone

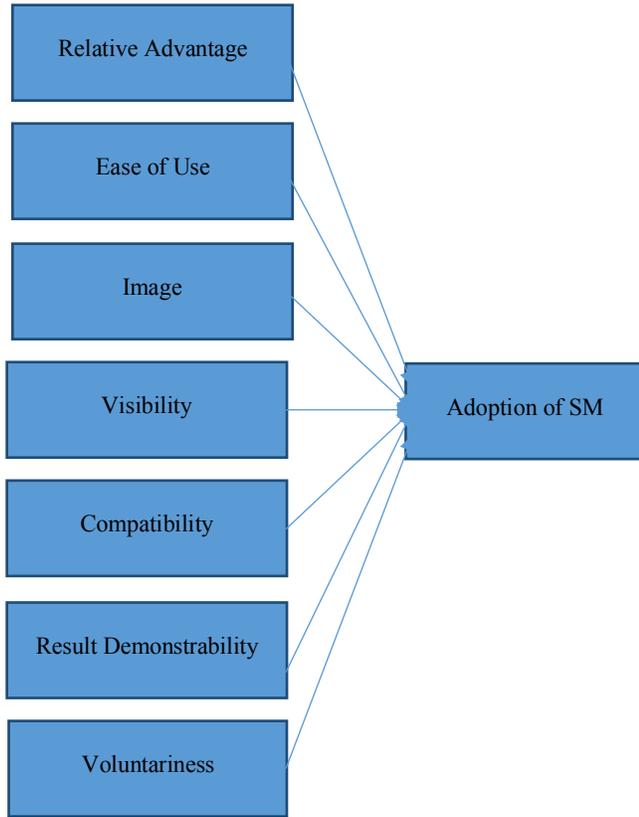


Figure 2: Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT)

U&G will measure motivation and gratification factors of SM use by academic librarians. Zohoorian-Fooladi and Abrizah [29] used U&G to measure SM among academic librarians in three universities in Malaysia. The study identifies that personal and professional gratifications were interaction, communication and building relationship between librarians and users. In all three university libraries, it was clear that librarians’ professional gratification of using SM was related to their obligation and their duty, not personal satisfaction. U&G will measure motivation and gratification factors of SM use by academic librarians.

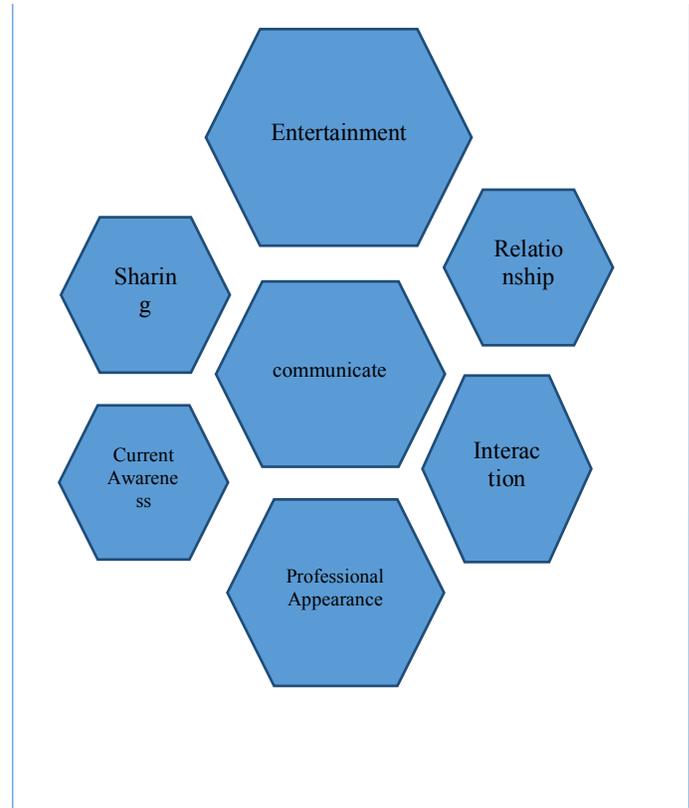


Figure 3: Uses & Gratification Theory (U&G)

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study will be underpinned by the post-positivist world view. It is a suitable paradigm for researchers who have an interest in some aspects of positivism such as quantification and yet, desire to incorporate interpretive concerns around subjectivity and mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods [30]. A mixed methodological approach will be used in this study. It involves combining the elements of quantitative and qualitative methods. The purpose of using a mixed method is to ensure an increase in reliability of observation and to maintain the strengths and improve on salient weaknesses in both designs [31]. Creswell [32] opines that mixed method is useful when not much has been written about the theme, topic or the population being studied, and the researcher seeks to listen to participants and build an understanding based on their perception. The study will adopt survey design within the case study. The South-West geopolitical zone in Nigeria consists of Oyo state, Ogun State, Ondo state, Ekiti state, Osun state and Lagos state. South-West, Nigeria will be purposively selected for this study because the region is referred to as the hub of educational activities in Nigeria and thus the most educationally advanced [33]. There are thirty-three universities in the south-west, zone. The universities are categorized into Federal Universities (6), State Universities (8) and Private Universities respectively (19). Six universities will be purposively selected, namely: University of Ibadan (UI) and (UNILAG) University of Lagos (Federal Universities); Ekiti State University (EKSU) and (LASU) Lagos State University (State Universities); Babcock University (BU) and (CU) Covenant University (Private Universities). The six universities will be selected because they are at the forefront of the implementation of SM in their various categories. The study population will consist of 113 academic librarians and 377

S/N	Name of University	Numbers of Academic Librarians	Number of Undergraduate Student Population
1	University of Ibadan	31	33,481
2	University of Lagos	20	57,183
3	Ekiti State University	12	23,000
4	Lagos State University	14	35,000
5	Babcock University	17	20,000
6	Covenant University	19	15,000
	Total	113	183,664

undergraduate students in the selected universities. The numbers of academic librarians in each university are 31 at UI; 20 for UNILAG; 12 at EKSU (Library Academic Summit Paper-Ekiti State University, 2015); 14 in LASU; 17 in BU; and 19 in CU. The study will take complete enumeration (census) of academic librarians in the six selected universities because their population is less than 200 [34]. In contrast, a published table of determining sample sizes by Krejcie and Morgan as shown in Table 2 will be used to select the sample size for undergraduate students in the six selected universities. The choice of academic libraries will be purposively chosen for this study is informed by the fact that they are well endowed with printed and electronic resources and staffing compared to public and other types of libraries [35]. In the context of this study, an academic librarian is a person who holds a bachelor's or master's degree in library studies discipline [36]. The choice of undergraduate students in the six selected universities will be purposively chosen for the study because they are called digital savvies and it is expected that they are vast in the use of these technologies [37].

Table 1. The relative distribution of population in the selected Universities

The sampling frame is the list of undergraduate students at the University of Ibadan [38]; University of Lagos [39]; Ekiti State University [40]; Lagos State University [41]; Babcock University [42]; and Covenant University [43]. Using a published table of determining sample sizes by [34] as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Table for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population

Size of Population	Sample Size
15000	375
20000	377
30000	379
40000	380
50000	381

The sample will be distributed among the six selected universities based on the strength of the population of undergraduate students using a formula recommended by [45] represented below:

$$N \times S \div TP$$

Where N is the population of undergraduate students in each of the six selected universities; S is the total sample size and TP is the total population. Based on this formula, the distribution of samples across the six selected universities is reflected in Table 3. For example, the sample population for UI will be:

$$\text{University of Ibadan} = 33481 \times 379 \div 183664 = 69$$

$$\text{University of Lagos} = 57183 \times 379 \div 183664 = 118$$

$$\text{Ekiti State University} = 23000 \times 377 \div 183664 = 47$$

$$\text{Lagos State University} = 35000 \times 379 \div 183664 = 72$$

$$\text{Babcock University} = 20000 \times 377 \div 183664 = 41$$

$$\text{Covenant University} = 15000 \times 375 \div 183664 = 69$$

Table 3. Sample Size of Undergraduate Students in the six selected Universities

S/N	Name of University	Undergraduate Students
1	University of Ibadan	69
2	University of Lagos	118
3	Ekiti State University	47
4	Lagos State University	72
5	Babcock University	41
6	Covenant University	30
	Total	377

Therefore, the total population for the study will be 113 academic librarians and 377 undergraduate students giving an overall number of 490 respondents will be reached for the study. About student population, the researcher will distribute the questionnaire during lecture hours randomly in the 6 selected universities until the stipulated sample size is reached. University librarians who are principal heads of the 6 selected university libraries will be interviewed, while 107 academic librarians will complete the survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaires will consist of questions related to variables being investigated such as adoption of SM, use of SM, motivation and gratification from using SM. Quantitative data will be sorted, coded and analyzed using SPSS. This is because SPSS allows for easy manipulation of statistical information [46]. Descriptive and inferential statistics will be generated. Correlation Analysis will be used for testing hypotheses at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance, while Regression Analysis will be employed in evaluating the relationships that existed between the variables of the study and also the predictive abilities of the study variables. Correlation analysis is a method of statistical evaluation used to examine the strength of a relationship between two variables [47]. In contrast, the qualitative data collected through interview schedule will be analyzed using thematic content analysis. Braun and Clarke [48] maintain that using thematic content analysis offers an accessible and theoretically-flexible approach to analyzing qualitative data.

The study will comply with the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Policy. Permission has been granted by the six universities

under study. Participants will be informed and briefed on the purpose of the study before questionnaires are administered and before the commencement of the interview. The respondents will be free to withdraw from the study if they saw wish at any stage of the research.

8. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

This study will be relevant to academic libraries, universities, researchers and the society at large. It will help academic libraries embrace the new technological innovation that is been demonstrated by the use of SM in service delivery to library clientele; improve social interaction, collaboration and knowledge sharing to enhance effective flow of communication with their clientele. It will give academic libraries insights to the fact that with the usage of SM, all sections of the library (Circulation Section, Collection Development, Reference Section, Technical Section, Serial's Section and Automation Section) can work collaboratively to achieving a feat in Librarianship thereby making the profession the cynosure of all eyes. The outcome of this study will be a good roadmap for library schools and the digital library community to see the significance of including SM into library curriculum. This is because when academic librarians have inculcated the significance of SM while in library schools, it will be difficult for them not to use it in performing their professional duties when they get to the field. This is simply because, they would have seen it is germane to library routines. Also, Universities will experience an improved academic environment where researchers, staff and students' have easier access to the needed information from academic librarians at the click of a button in the comfort of their offices and residences. It will also contribute to the intellectual development of academic librarians and help in building their online academic profile. This gives them a better stead to collaborate with other colleagues globally. Furthermore, it will lead to an improved society as the wealth of information ruling the world is made easily accessible via these technologies. This is because members of the society do not need to visit the library to be able to access materials. Basically, because these materials have been made available on the library website through the collaborative task carried out by academic librarians via SM; and also reference services are brought to the door steps of members of the society through SM. The study will also assist in creating a national policy framework on SM use in academic libraries which could be integrated into academic library routines to facilitate library operations in Nigeria university libraries. Using TAM, IDT and U&G as the theory underpinning this study will extend the frontier of knowledge in the area of research that this study is situated, which is digital library community and librarianship as a whole. The combination of these three theories will provide a veritable tool for the management of academic libraries in Nigeria to assess the likelihood of success for SM adoption and help them understand the drivers of the use and acceptance of these technologies. Consequently, the findings of the study will serve as the base on which further study on the adoption and use of SM use for the provision of library and information services in Nigeria is built; since it has been discovered from extant literatures that there is paucity of research in the application of theory to the study of SM use in Nigeria. The findings in this study will have positive implications for the digital native clientele that the library is serving. These clientele are said to have adopted and are versatile in the usage of SM in large numbers [52]; [53]; [54]; [55] and they are expecting that academic libraries should be able to meet all their information needs, anytime and anywhere without any constraints.

9. ORIGINALITY OF THE STUDY

The study is novel in the sense that theories underpinning this research are TAM, IDT and U&G which are core theories in technology adoption and acceptance. This theory employs a unique vocabulary to articulate the specific factors considered to be important in the study. Research from literature has shown that there is paucity of research in the application of theories in examining the use of SM among academic librarians in south-west, Nigeria. Baro and Godfrey (2015) opined that there is absence of requisite standards, plans and policies concerning adoption and use of SM in Nigerian academic libraries, a lacuna that this study intends to fill. Extant literature has shown that there is limited understanding of factors influencing adoption and use of SM in the provision of library and information services in developing countries like Nigeria [17] [18] Therefore, this study will serve as a veritable tool in understanding these factors and how they can be curbed in order to bridge the dichotomy between the perceived benefits of SM in libraries and actual impressions of patrons [23] [21]. TAM will address the SM use behaviour of academic librarians; IDT will discourse the innovation adoption rate of SM among academic librarians and students; while U&G will measure motivation and gratification factors of SM usage by academic librarians. Though previous studies have combined the TAM and IDT [55], no study has combined the three-theoretical framework TAM, IDT, U&G that will in combination be used to underpin this study. These theories will provide a thorough understanding of the adoption, use behaviour and motivation for SM in academic libraries in the South-West, Nigeria [56]. Hence, this will go a long way in understanding how academic libraries in Nigeria use SM in a developing country context. This will also help in improving library curriculum and help in building the intellectual capacity of academic libraries in the adoption and use of SM in the provision of library and information services to clientele. The findings from the three theories underpinning the study will be a starting point for further research in the field of SM use by academic libraries in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

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