

INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF LIBRARY USERS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTION: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

The library has some vital activities of which comprise of collection development, reference services management, document delivery service, access to organized collections held by the library which provide users with information search and retrieval in course of their research. It has been observed that the new crop of students in the tertiary institutions are found of using the world wide web instead of visiting the library hence the attitude of students in higher institution is drifting towards the use of social media than visiting the library since according to them is more easier and convenient to them in carrying out their research. Social media enables information to be retrieved and communicated amongst users. Social media includes the use of Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Zoom, blogs and wikis and so on. The paper concluded that libraries should key into the use of social media (electronic platform) to get information to their users. It was recommended that, library staff should be trained in the area of technology to be able to handle the dissemination of information through the electronic channel

Keywords: Information, Library Users, Tertiary Institution, Social Media

Introduction

Library is an essential component in any institution of learning. Library is usually a place where educative and historical collections are kept and made available to the library users depending on their area of interest. It is often said, that the library is the life wire of any organization. The library has some vital activities of which comprise of collection development, reference services management, document delivery service, access to organized collections held by the library which provide users with information search and retrieval in course of their research (Bhoi, 2017; Husain & Nazim, 2015; Malhan, 2006; Cholin, 2005). In the light of the above, library staff need to carry out their functions as librarians to users diligently in other for library users to access library collections without stress. Library is taking a new dimension due to information technology and information seeking behaviour of library users. Some of this new dimension is the wave of social media network or simply put social media and the use of World Wide Web and so on. According to Thomas & McDonald, (2005) opined that, libraries are facing new generation of online users who are technologically savvy and integrate information access and use in all spheres of their lives to an unprecedented degree. Gradually, generation is changing with the time and the present generation's library users are too passionate with the technology. It is well known that all the success depends upon the satisfaction of the library users. So, in the present scenario the quickest library service is more approachable through the world -wide web and internet (Berners-Lee, Cailliau, Groff, & Pollermann, 1992). However, it has been observed that the new crop of students in the tertiary institutions are found of using the world wide web instead of visiting the library hence the attitude of

students in higher institution is drifting towards the use of social media than visiting the library since according to them is more easier and convenient to them in carrying out their research.

Social media enables information to be retrieved and communicated amongst users. Social media includes the use of Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Zoom, blogs and wikis and so on. Social media can also be accessed using mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets in retrieving and communicating information to others, (Bhoi, 2017). Due to the present use of social media, it is well on record that most libraries are now using their social media page such as facebook, blogs, YouTube, Wikis t attract library users in other to shape their attitude toward the new technology and be able t carryout their research from their comfort zone. According to Oyighan (2018) posited that, right information seeking behaviour would empower an undergraduate to see, encode, translate, hold and utilize viable information or learning materials. Through Information seeking behaviour, students turn out keener and more adaptable in looking for and utilizing information in the social media spheres. Social media is a collective term for websites and applications which focus on communication, community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. There are different types of social media which are normally dedicated to forums, micro blogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation, and wikis among others. Social media is used for various activities depending on the users, it can be used to stay in touch and interact with friends and family, while others use for research purposes, (Rouse, 2017). Social media is about passing and receiving information from others, hence its important to have a basic concept about information.

Concept of Information

Information is no doubt an integral part of man's daily activities and existence. Information is a conveyor of knowledge, a change agent, a reinforcement of ideas and opinion (Ugwu, Ogbu, & Aniekwe, 2015). Information is an important factor in improving student's self-efficacy and attitude in the investigation of library and information science, subsequently, it has for quite some time been sloughed to comprehend the components that impels an information searcher towards finding applicable information (Oyighan, 2018). The information condition of the 21st Century blossoms with few abilities that are fundamental for lifelong learning. All things considered, the concept of information literacy, which evolved with the coming of information and communication technology, had developed and has come to realization and fortified to end up perceived as basic literacy for the 21st Century (Oyighan, 2018; Bruce, 2002). Webber and Johnston (2003) characterize information as "the reception of proper information conducts to get, through whatever channel or medium, the information very much fitted to information needs, together with basic consciousness of the significance of astute and moral utilization of information in the society".

Information therefore can be seen as that which adds to our awareness or understanding of some events, ideas, issues or problems to which people in the society should have access to and participate (Hornby, 2000). Information can also be defined as data that have subjected to some processing functions capable of answering a user's query, be it recorded, summarized or simply collections help in decision making. Social media in library services have not changed the roles in disseminating library information but have improved on them drastically. When information is conveyed, received and assimilated, it leads to a change in the behaviour of the recipient of the message. These changes in behaviour can be seen in the forms of either actions taken or an increase of recipient's store of knowledge. Information is vital to the survival of all living things. Prompt access to quality information makes all the difference (Ugwu, Ogbu, & Aniekwe, 2015; Zakari, 2005). Thus, quality information leads to quality service rendered by the library to its users. It is imperative to detail the services rendered by the library to the information seekers.

Services Provided by Libraries to Users

Libraries are established to provide information resources to library users. It is the duty of the librarian with his staff to provide library services to the readers (users) with the available resources. The librarian stocks the library with library collections that are relevant and useful to the users. The library offers services to users which include the following public services, Circulation /Borrowing,

Course Reserves, library Instruction/Information Literacy, Information Commons, Reference, Room Reservations, Photocopies amongst others. Extension services which are undertaken with the objective of reaching groups of people who might otherwise be unaware of the operations of a library. In another vein Ugwu, Ogbu and Aniekwe, (2015) mentioned some services rendered by the library to its users to include circulation services, such as lending of books to users, sending of overdue notices, discharging of books, provision of books on stack for users, registration of users, clearance of users, reserving of materials for needy ready readers, shelving and shelf-reading, identification of unused materials and weeding them, keeping of accurate record of transactions and keeping statistics; reference services which include answering of ready-reference questions, orientation/instruction in the use of the library, current awareness services, provision of indexes and abstracts, translation services, inter library loan facilities, photocopying services, referral services.

The services rendered by the library tend to provide information to library users who are seeking information for their personal or societal needs. Information seeking needs propels an undergraduate seeking it to either visit the library or use the social media. It is necessary to create awareness of the readers towards information seeking needs as the library tends to provides answers to the needs of the researchers.

Information Seeking Behaviour

Arua, and Chikezie (2006) define information sources as the materials or means through which information can be found to meet a particular need. Uhegbu (2007) defines information seeking as a conscious effort to acquire information in response to a need or gap in your knowledge. Information seeking behaviour is a key concept in Library and information science profession. Olajiuka and Babatope (2012) defined information behaviour as the study of how people need, seek, give and use information in different contexts, including the workplace and everyday living. According to Attama and Ezema (2015) information seeking behaviour is the way people go about searching for information. They also observed that students' information seeking behaviour involves purposeful information seeking as a result of the need to complete course assignments, prepare for class discussions, seminars, workshops, and write final-year research papers. Information seeking behaviour is expressed in various forms, from reading printed material to research and experimentation (Uhegbu, 2007).

Information-seeking behaviour remains a key research area; academic librarians around the world strive to understand the information needs of undergraduate students and ways of satisfy these needs. Ugwu, Ogbu, and Aniekwe, (2015) posit that though there seems to exist many reasons and sources of information to the information user, the university library occupies a central position in the information seeking process of undergraduate students in Nigerian universities. Undergraduate students' information seeking behaviour was considered the biggest problem to be investigated. Most undergraduate students find it difficult to locate the right sources of information to meet their needs and without adequate information succeeding academically would be a great challenge.

Benefits of Social Media to Libraries

Social media sites have its own advantages to Librarians and Clients. Some of the benefits are as follows:

- i. Social networking sites facilitate collaborations and promote effective communication between Librarians and their patrons.
- ii. SNSs generate flow of information excluded from search engines and Library Catalogues.
- iii. Some writers as cited in Scale (2008) suggest that social networking sites will lead to future delivery of information to meet search queries
- iv. SNSs have the capacity to make library resources available to patrons.
- v. Social networking sites wall linked to a library's web page has the potential of reaping great results by attracting and serving distance and continuing education students. Watts, Dodds,

and Newman (2002) stress that it is through social networking sites that any person is capable of communicating and delivering a message to a distant target person.

- vi. SNSs help African Librarians and Libraries to keep pace with technologies and compete effectively with the developed World.
- vii. Social networking sites if instituted in Libraries will go a long way to solve some of the pertinent issues confronting them including long awaiting delivery of ordered materials, limited awareness of library services and operations, decision making in which users are usually sideline, etc.
In addition, Social Networking can help minimize the impact of insufficient professional librarians in the running of these Libraries, by serving some of the patrons online by Professional. This can include providing answer to queries from different people at the same time thereby reducing their physical presence in the libraries.
- viii. With limited space, African Academic Libraries can go unnoticed if the necessary information can be accessed in the comfort of the users' rooms and offices.
- ix. African Academic Libraries can use social networking sites to deliver effective services to clients with limited resources.
- x. The use of this tool does not require any special equipment apart from computer, Internet connectivity and a trained professional to manage.

Attitude of Tertiary Students towards Social Media

Tertiary education students are so much engross with social media this days as they find the new technology as very interesting in terms of communication with family and friends. It can be seen from the disposition of students in the tertiary institution using their smart phones to search information online. The continued growth of the cyberspace era has brought with it a permanent change in the way that students interact and socialize. A major part of this change is the advent of so-called social networking sites on the Internet, which have evolved to become virtual communities where people communicate, share information, and perhaps most important, build and maintain ongoing relationships. On-line social networking communities such as Facebook and MySpace have become part of the daily life of a majority of college-level students, with a potentially far-reaching impact on the way that they study and learn. The emergence of social media changed the communication landscape and the way people interact (Abdulgalil & Abuelgasim, 2018).

The use of social media facilitates communication and collaboration among users to support the student-centered learning environment. Social media technologies have not only substantially changed the way organizations, communities, and individuals communicate and socialize with each other, but they have also changed the way people learn, share information, exchange knowledge, and create new ideas. Usage of these emerging technologies is growing rapidly among the present generation of students. Students are using these websites to connect and interact with friends and others. Also, they use it to share knowledge, look for information and try to solve problems related to their learning activities. Thus, students are aggressively adopting social networking sites to perform different activities and tasks in order to enhance their learning. Embedding new technologies within the learning process needs to be wisely introduced and carefully designed (Abdulgalil & Abuelgasim, 2018).

Mao (2014) in Abdulgalil and Abuelgasim (2018) investigated high school students' affordances for social media, their attitudes and beliefs about these new technologies, and related obstacles and issues in using social media. Findings indicated that students show positive attitudes and beliefs about social media use in education. Specifically, students believed they could improve their learning when using social media and also enjoy using social media for an assignment or their own learning after school. However, some students thought that social media created distraction and was time consuming. Lau (2012) in Abdulgalil and Abuelgasim (2018) reported that online social networks help initiate learning activities among students. Students who use online social networks can develop their knowledge based on extensive communications and knowledge sharing from the social network sites. Kutbi (2015) conducted a study on how undergraduate female students in the Kingdom

of Saudi Arabia Perceive the social media website Twitter as an educational Tool. The results of the study found that high percentage of the participants, 84%, prefer the use of Twitter as a learning tool. This high percentage proves that youth has a huge growing interest in technology. According to the Internet World Stats, 53% of Twitter users around the world are females and 77 % of them are between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five (Internet World Stats, 2013).

The Library and Social Media Implication to Students

The library is a place that provides resources and materials for students to consult in search for information. The library is a store house of collections that enables students to carry out effective research. However, it has been seen in this students that the present generation of students scantily visit the library for research purposes rather uses the social media tools for their research benefits. Despite this scenario, the library still serve their users effectively as some students still make good use of the library for their research needs. The librarians and staff of the library on the other hands are making everything to meet up with the current technological trend as most library now have electronic means of communicating their users. The search for information usually prompt students to have diverse ways of seeking information, this information needs prompted their demand for positive information sources. When students are searching for information to meet their needs, they use different sources of information (Abdulgalil & Abuelgasim, 2018).

Libraries create knowledge and share it with communities (MacAdam, 1998). For instance, Librarians or users share information resources with others. Knowledge sharing is an important aspect for libraries in utilizing Social networking, since libraries play an important role in knowledge sharing (MacAdam, 1998). To achieve knowledge sharing, technical and systematic infrastructure is needed to ensure, “making knowledge available to others who need it” (Seonghee & Boryung, 2008). Libraries act as the backend of their media, provide organized resources on social networking platforms, stimulate user’s participation, and fulfill the dynamics of knowledge sharing (Harinarayana & Raju, 2010). Facebook and Twitter are applied by libraries to build up academic networks, “catalyzing the exchange of knowledge” (Ayu & Abrizah, 2011; Nicholas, Watkinson, Rowlands, & Jubb, 2011). There by making the students to access library materials from the comfort of their homes. Kim and Abbas (2010) reported that 55 libraries in Massachusetts Institute of Technology made announcements on Twitter, including those about resources, workshops, courses, training, conferences, etc. Compared with other Web 2.0 technologies, Facebook and Twitter are more capable in syndicating and disseminating information (Cahill, 2009).

Library management in the various institutions are on speed to catch up with the current technological trend in capturing students’ interest in terms of using the library materials and resources from the comfort of their home. This is done through the various electronic channels available to the libraries of various institutions. due to the positive attitude of the library management to making information available online is increasing the interest of students to visit the electronic library to meet their information needs.

Conclusion

The paper discussed the information seeking behaviour of library users in tertiary institution. Information is a finished product that gets to the final users. The library is an information store house to provide the needed information as required by researchers and students. It was established in the paper that social media is an effective tool of gaining information and that students are interested in using the social media to get information from the comfort of their home and that the libraries are also making good use of the social media to disseminate information to their users. It is therefore necessary that all libraries should key into the use of social media (electronic platform) to get information to their users.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made from the study:

1. Libraries are to make proper use of electronic channels in providing library service to their users
2. The library staff should be trained in the area of technology to be able to handle the dissemination of information through the electronic channel
3. Funds should be made available to library management to be able to meet the financial needs of using electronic channels to enhance library service to users.

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