

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETING STRATEGY FOR THE USE OF LIBRARY INFORMATION RESOURCES BY UNDERGRADUATES IN NIGER DELTA UNIVERSITY (NDU), BAYELSA STATE

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Abstract

Purpose: The study investigated influence of social media as a marketing strategy for the use of library information resources by undergraduates in Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State. Broadly, the aim of the study was to examine the relationship between social media and the use of library information resources by undergraduate students in Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State. One research question and one hypothesis guided this study.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The study employed survey and correlational research design involving a population of 5,836 students of 2019/2020 academic session that registered with the library. A sample of 374 students was used for the study. Questionnaire was used to collect data. The research adopted mean and standard deviation as descriptive statistics while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to answer the research questions.

Findings: The result from the data analysis revealed that social media as a marketing strategy promoted the use of library information resources by undergraduates in NDU; and there is a moderate positive relationship between social media/print media and the use of library information resources.

Implications: The researchers recommend that training for social media utilization should be encouraged and libraries should build up social media platforms for their marketing plan.

Originality/Value: The work has contributed to knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the influence of user-education, social media and print media on the utilization of library resources in Niger Delta University.

Keywords: Marketing, Social Media, Information Resources, Undergraduates

Introduction

The library provides physical or digital access to materials and may be a physical location or a virtual space. The objective of the university library is to support teaching, learning and research for members of staff, students and other users. The library provides materials for educational advancement and sustenance. Libraries are the central point from which all intellectual activities roll to all academic and research programmes. The extent to which academic libraries can render effective services to meet the needs of students, staff and

immediate community of their parent institutions depend on their ability to create awareness of the available resources and services in the library.

For the library users to know the holdings or information resources that are available in the library there is need for the library to market its resources (products) for efficient and effective utilization of the available resources. Libraries, with the adoption of marketing principles in the provision of services will now become client-oriented which is the reason for their establishment rather than product-oriented

when they develop their collections without considering the information needs of the users nor the creation of awareness of the resources and services of the library. Marketing covers those activities that connect the organization to those parts of its outside world that use, buy, sell or influence the output it produces, the benefits and services it offers (Vij, 2012). The author states further that the products and services that can be marketed in order to satisfy the needs of library users range from books, periodicals, reports to electronic documents to other allied services from traditional ones like circulation, interlibrary loan, reference services, access to international databases, online researches and CD-ROM searches.

For effective marketing of their products and services, libraries need to adopt some marketing strategies. Benson, Udo-Anyanwu and Onuoha (2016) identified the strategies used in the libraries to include use of library notice board, face to face interaction with user community, seminar/workshops, use of institutions websites/library online, networking among professional colleagues, through display and exhibition. Social media has become a household name and it seems to be what people cannot do without because it facilitates access to information (Uwandum & Osuji, 2021). Social media includes networking web sites like Facebook, MySpace, micro blogging web sites like Twitter and other media like blogs, podcasts, photos and videos. By posting library material via social media on library page, it can be used by the variety of locations on the Web (Tuten cited in Khan & Bhatti, 2012). The library is a growing organism as such library staff should be innovative and creative to make use of social media tools available to them for effective service delivery. Omini and Osuolale (2019) found out that academic libraries mostly use Facebook and blog to promote library resources and services. Oyeniran and Olajide (2019) discovered that reference services, marketing of information products and services, strategic dissemination of information, exhibition and display of new arrivals, display of reading lists, online registration of users, among

others are various services rendered via social media in the library.

It is based on this background that this study was carried out to ascertain the influence of social media as a marketing strategy for the use of library information resources by undergraduates in Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State.

Statement of the Problem

Information resources in various formats constitute the collection of libraries. There however, other media such as internet, television, radio, leisure services, holiday services, computer games etc. that contain information needed by the library users. This leads to the library being in a form of completion with these media. Libraries need to publicize their resources and services to their clientele. It is not enough to acquire materials and plan good services and then wait for patrons to discover them on their own but devise means of putting those plans into action with the consideration of those factors that can influence the survival of the library. This calls for the marketing of these resources and services. The ultimate purpose of marketing in libraries is to get the clientele informed and educate them on how to make use of the library and its resources.

Marketing of library services have not been taken to be a priority in library service delivery. This has been obviously seen through lack of proper dissemination of library services to the target users which has resulted in inadequate use of the library resources and service. If libraries do not market their products and services, what then will become of their fate in this 21st century that so many other media now compete with the library in providing information to users? In order to exist and remain relevant in the on-going growth of new information age, with the use of android phones and so no, libraries must adopt marketing principles and strategies in their operations. It is on this ground that this study is out to investigate the relationship between the marketing strategies used by the university libraries and the use of library resources by

under-graduate students in the Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State.

Research Questions

The following question was posed to guide this research:

1. What is the extent of relationship between the use of social media as a marketing strategy and the use of library information resources by undergraduates in Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State?

Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis is formulated for this study:

Ho₁: There is no significance relationship between social media as a marketing strategy and the use of library information resources by undergraduates in Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State universities.

Literature Review

The concept of social media has been used interchangeably to describe the same concept as social networking site or web 2.0. It is a two-way path that allows the users to connect and interact with the system unlike the traditional media where one can just read or listen to reports like the television. As described by Horsfall, David-West and Igwe (2019). Social media is an interactive computer mediated technology that facilitates the creating, sharing and exchange of information in virtual communities and networks. Social media is a platform made available to all multiple users to connect, interact and share content with others. It is a bet-based applications for interactions usually of user-generated content that enables the creation of both individuals and organizational profiles by the user that facilitates the connection of different profiles all over the world. These social networking platforms allow users to develop personal pages filled with content like videos, music, images, educational content etc. these platforms can as well be used for research visibility, collaboration etc.

Social media is a major tool for library services in this 21st century. The view of a library being a physical where users can visit to get information is speedily changing to a social cyberspace where users can have access, communicate likewise contribute to existing knowledge. So many librarians now use social network platforms to relate with their patrons. Social media enable libraries to bring to the notice of their patrons about their products and services. Issa, Igwe and Uzuegbu cited in Horsfall, David-West and Igwe (2019), maintained that advertising available library resources on social media will give patrons the opportunity to know the available resources/services of the library in her database as well as her collection and how to access them from remote terminals. In order to provide information to users, the library can connect with people through social media as long as there is internet connection, geographical location not being a barrier.

There are many available social media applications. These social media platforms are categorized in different ways. From instance, IgweSadiku and Edam-Agbor (2019) classified social media platforms into the following categories:

1. Social networks: These include facebook, twitter, linkedIn, it involves connecting with people.
2. Medial sharing networks: Examples are instagram, snapchat, youtube, they share photos, videos and other media.
3. Discussion forums: They include reddit, quora, dig. They share news and ideas.
4. Book marking and content curation networks: Examples are pinterest, flipboard. They use to discover, save and share new content.
5. Consumer review networks: Examples are yelp, Zomato, TripAdvisor. They are used to find and review businesses.
6. Blogging and publishing networks: Examples are wordpress, blogger, Tumblr. They are used to publish content online.

7. Interest based networks: Examples are Goodreads, Houzz, Last.fm. They are used to share interests and hobbies.
8. Social shopping networks: Examples are polyvore, Etsy, Fancy. They are used to do shopping online.
9. Sharing economy networks: Examples are Airbnb, uber, Taskrabbit. They used to trade goods and services.
10. Anonymous social networks: Examples are Whisper, Ask.fm, AfterSchol. They communicate anonymously.

Several studies have been carried on the influence of social media and discoveries were made. Khan and Bhatti (2012) examined the application of social media in marketing of library and information services, a case study from Pakistan. It was discovered that majority of them were on the affirmation of the relevance of social media to capture the attention of online users and aid in distant learning and information sharing. The study also pointed out the challenges of proper utilization of social media in library services are lack of knowledge, inadequate opportunities, slow speed of internet, electricity failure etc. Omini and Osuolale (2019), investigated on the utilization of social media platforms by librarians for promoting library resources and services in Nigerian tertiary institutions in Cross River state. The findings showed that Blogs and Facebook were the most used social media platforms in promoting a two-way communication with library users and provide forum for feedback which promote usage and up to date information for users. Adewojo and Mayowa Adebara (2016), investigated on social media usage by library staff in academic libraries, the case of Yaba College of Technology, Lagos State, Nigeria. It was revealed from the study that the Facebook and WhatsApp were the most frequently used among the social media tools as key challenges of adequate utilization of social media. Shafawi and Hassan (2018) researched on user engagement with social media and its implication on library usage using public and academic libraries in Malaysia as a case study. The finding of the study revealed that

information quality perceived interactivity and perceived Net Benefit have empirically proven to be relevant in determining users' engagement with social media. The study as well revealed that there were two categories of online engagements which have positively effected the use of library resources. Alawadhi and Al-Daihani (2019) investigated on marketing academic library information services using social media. The findings of the study revealed that librarians of academic institutions have a positive view about the use of media. Factors that were identified as relating to social media as means of marketing library products and services were the influence of social media on raising awareness and providing needs analysis and satisfaction assessments. The study also revealed management support for use of social media for marketing of library services is inadequate.

The importance of using social media as a marketing strategy notwithstanding, there are so many challenges to the effective use of social media in libraries. Danbaki, Mohammed, Gado and Ikegwuiro (2020) maintained that lack of finance, limited bandwidth, lack of proper training of library staff in the area of using social media, low level of technology penetration, unreliable power supply and poor network connectivity are challenges facing social media use by Nigerian tertiary institution libraries.

Research Methodology

The study adopted survey and correlational research design. The population of this study is 5,836 students comprised of all undergraduate students of 2019/2020 academic session in the Niger Delta University that are registered with the library. A sample of 374 undergraduates was derived using Taro Yamene's statistical formular. The instrument for data collection was a researcher made questionnaire rating using the four-point Likert scale. The method used in analyzing the data collected for this research was descriptive statistic which are mean, mode and standard deviation. Pearson Moment correlation coefficient was used to answer some of the research questions.

Data Analyses and Presentation

Analyses were based on the returned 358 copies of the instrument in useable form out of

the 374 copies of questionnaire administered to the students. This shows a 95.7% return rate.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Socio-demographic Characteristics	Frequency (F)	Percentage %
Gender		
Male	104	29.1
Female	254	70.9
Total	358	100.0
Age		
16-25	251	70.1
26-35	91	25.4
36-Above	15	4.5
Total	358	100.0
Level		
Year 1	138	38.5
Year 2	56	15.6
Year 3	52	17.3
Year 4	84	23.5
Year 5	18	5.0
Total	358	100.0

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. The table shows that more than half 254(70.9%) of the respondents were females while 104(29.1%) were males. Based on the age of the respondents, 251(70.1%) were within 16-25 years, 91(25.4%) were within 26-35 years, and 15(4.5%) were within 36 years and above. Based on the level of the students, 138(38.5%) of the

respondents were in year one, 56(15.6%) were in year two, 52(17.3%) were in year three, 84(23.5%) were in year four, and 18(5.0%) were in year five.

Research Question 1: To what extent do social media as a marketing strategy enhance the use of library information resources by undergraduates in Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State?

Table 2: Extent Social Media as a Marketing Strategy Enhance the Use of Library Information Resources

SN	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	The use of WhatsApp messages as a strategy for marketing library information resources positively affect the use of the library resources by students.	2.85	.81726	**
2	The use of Facebook messaging as a means of advertising library information resources positively affects the use of library resources by students.	2.87	.72585	**
3	The use of Instagram messages as a means of marketing library information resources positively affects the use of library resources by students.	2.81	.67043	**
4	The use of the school library website as marketing platform for library resources positively affects the use of library resources by students.	3.43	.68577	**
5	General text messaging as a marketing strategy positively affects the use of library information resources by students.	2.90	.77130	**
Grand mean		2.97	.73412	**

** Agreed. * Disagreed.

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

Table 2 shows the impact of social media as a marketing strategy on the use of library information resource by undergraduates in Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State. The result shows that the grand mean =

2.97 ± 0.73412 is greater than the criterion mean = 2.5 indicating that social media as a marketing strategy enhanced the use of library information resource by undergraduates in Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State. The

items which enhanced academic performance include: The use of WhatsApp messages as a strategy for marketing library information resources positively affect the use of the library resources by students ($\bar{X} = 2.85 \pm 0.81726$), The use of Facebook messaging as a means of advertising library information resources positively affects the use of library resources by students ($\bar{X} = 2.87 \pm 0.72585$), The use of Instagram messages as a means of marketing library information resources positively affects the use of library resources by students ($\bar{X} = 2.81 \pm 0.67043$), The use of the school library

website as marketing platform for library resources positively affects the use of library resources by students ($\bar{X} = 3.43 \pm 0.68577$) and general text messaging as a marketing strategy positively affects the use of library information resources by students ($\bar{X} = 2.90 \pm 0.77130$).

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between social media as a marketing strategy and the use of library information resources by undergraduates in Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State universities.

Table 3: Relationship between Social Media and the Use of Library Information Resources

		Correlations		Decision
		Social Media	Library Information Resources	
Social Media	Pearson Correlation	1	.469	Rejected
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
Library Information Resources	N	358	358	
	Pearson Correlation	.469	1	
Social Media	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	358	358	

*S= Significant p<0.05

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

The result from SPSS analysis, shows the relationship between social media as a marketing strategy and the use of library information resources by undergraduates in Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State universities. Pearson correlation coefficient demonstrates a moderate positive relationship between the two variables $r=.469$, indicating that there exists a moderate positive relationship between social media as a marketing strategy and the use of library information resources by undergraduates, the null hypothesis which states that there is no relationship between social media as a marketing strategy and the use of library information resources by undergraduates in Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State universities was rejected and the alternate hypothesis upheld [(P =.000) p<0.05].

Discussion on Findings

Findings from the study showed that there was significant relationship between social media as a marketing strategy and the use of library information resources by undergraduates in Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State

universities. This result is in tandem with the study by Whan and Bhatti (2013) who examined the application of social media in marketing of library and information services, a case study from Pakistan. Findings showed a positive response attitude of respondent and majority of them were on the affirmation of the relevance of social media to capture the attention of online users and aid in distant learning and information sharing. It was recommended that the use of Facebook, Wikis, LinkedIn, Blogging, You tube, and online groups for marketing of information resources and services should be encouraged. Omini and Osuolale (2019), investigated on the utilization of social media platforms by librarians for promoting library resources and services in Nigerians tertiary institutions in Cross River state. The research was done in order to determine the usefulness of social media platform for enhancing library resources and services. Findings showed that Blogs and Facebook were the most used social media platforms in promoting a two-way communication with library users and provide forum for feedback which promote usage and up to date information for users. Adewojo and

Mayowa Adebara (2016), investigated on social media usage by library staff in academic libraries, the case of Yaba College of Technology, Lagos state, Nigeria. It was revealed from the study the Facebook and WhatsApp are the most frequently used among the social media tools as key challenges of adequate utilization of social media. Shafawi and Hassan (2018) researched on user engagement with social media and its implication on library usage using public and academic libraries in Malaysia as a case study. The finding of the study revealed that information quality perceived interactivity and perceived Net Benefit have empirically proven to be relevant in determining users' engagement with social media. The study as well revealed that there are two categories of online engagement positively have effect on the use of library resources.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that social media as a marketing strategy enhanced the use of library information resource by undergraduates in Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State; the results showed that there exists a moderate positive relationship between social media as a marketing strategy and the use of library information resources by undergraduates

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, the researchers recommended that training for social media utilization should be encouraged and that libraries should build up social media page for their marketing plan in order to enhance the utilization of social media, for news, service alerts, quick updates for online users and fund raising. Library users should be encouraged to participate on social media platform through seminars, symposiums more frequently.

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