Use and Impact of Social Media Tools for Information Services: A Lens on Librarians in State Polytechnics of North - East Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study employed an ex post facto descriptive survey research design to examine the use and impact of social media tools (SMTs) in the provision of library services among academic librarians in state-owned polytechnics in North-East Nigeria. The instrument's reliability was confirmed with a robust Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.89. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings revealed a high adoption rate and significant experience in social media use among librarians in the region. WhatsApp and Facebook were identified as the most popular and user-friendly tools for library services. While librarians overwhelmingly reported a positive perception and high impact of social media on their services, a critical analysis of the data showed a weak and statistically non-significant positive relationship between social media use and its perceived impact ($r=0.184$, $p>0.05$). The study found a statistically significant impact only on specific services, such as teaching basic library search tools and facilitating user inquiries. The study recommends that future research with a larger sample size be conducted to bridge the gap between perception and verifiable outcomes

Keywords: Use and impact of SMTs, State Polytechnics, Librarians, North-East Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

As the primary hub of an institution, polytechnic libraries are essential for supporting the teaching, learning, and research needs of their parent bodies. They play a dynamic role in directly contributing to institutional goals, such as fostering a culture of academic inquiry, promoting student success, and facilitating the development of practical, industry-relevant skills. To fulfill this crucial role in the modern information landscape, the strategic use of social media tools has become critically important. The widespread adoption of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has fundamentally transformed library operations, altering the very form of library resources and services from physical collections and in-person consultations to computer-generated means. This shift creates new forms of information, new sources of content, and novel, highly accessible ways of providing services.

A key product of this transformation is social media, which has been defined by World Book Encyclopaedia, (2018) as communication tools that people use on computers and smartphones to connect with one another and to share information. It utilizes mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms where individuals and communities can share, jointly create, and discuss user-generated content. These platforms move beyond one-way communication to foster a dynamic, two-way dialogue between librarians and their patrons.

To meet the evolving objectives and mission of their institutions, polytechnic librarians, particularly in Nigeria where mobile connectivity is rapidly expanding, must leverage these facilities to effectively deliver information resources and services to their users beyond the traditional operating hours. This proactive approach ensures that the library remains relevant and accessible to its users in the digital environments they already inhabit.

Problem Statement

Since the advent of the Internet in Nigeria, there has been a rapid increase in internet use and mobile phone connectivity among both librarians and students. This trend is evidenced by the growing number of mobile data subscriptions and the high penetration rates of smartphones on campuses. While this presents a clear opportunity for polytechnic librarians to use social media for information services, there is a distinct dearth of literature on the use of these facilities for services to patrons, particularly within state-owned polytechnics in North-East Nigeria. This gap is significant, as it means there is a lack of evidence-based practices, a potential for inefficient resource allocation, and a missed opportunity for these institutions to enhance their service delivery. It is therefore not only necessary, but also timely and expedient to investigate this phenomenon, as the findings can provide a roadmap for leveraging these tools to improve the efficiency and reach of library services.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to determine the relationship between the use of social media tools for library services and their impact on service delivery among polytechnic librarians in state-owned polytechnics in North-east Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the most frequently used social media tools for information service delivery.
2. Ascertain the major library services for which these tools are used.
3. Determine the impact of social media tools on information resource services.

Hypothesis

1. There is no relationship between the use of social media tools and their impact on service delivery.
2. The use of social media tools has no significant impact on major library service delivery.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Social Media Tools

The concept of social media Tools (SMT) has been viewed differently by many authors, there are salient elements that denote its conceptualizations. According to Zote (2025) social media tools are used for performing various activities related to social media. This includes scheduling, publishing, analytics, content creation and even automation. The term "social media tools" encompasses different kinds of tools dedicated to all these aspects of social media. Gartner Glossary (2025) sees it as web softwares that help to facilitate social media communication and information sharing. Examples include RSS, blogs, video logs, widgets, tags, forums, location-based services, Web chats, instant messaging, podcasts and microblogging services. Hence it could be deduced that SMT are online platforms that facilitate social interaction and content exchange among people with shared interests. For libraries, these accessible tools allow librarians to publish information, collaborate, and build community. They enable a two-way flow of information and dynamic dialogue, transitioning libraries from simple content providers to active community facilitators (Bullas, 2014). This shift is critical as it allows for a more personalized and interactive user experience. Rather than simply broadcasting information, librarians can now engage in conversations, answer questions, and receive instant feedback, which was not possible with earlier, static web formats.

Popular Social Media Tools Used by Librarians

Librarians are increasingly adopting social media to engage with patrons and enhance service delivery (Aboyade et al., 2023). This strategic shift allows libraries to connect with users in the digital spaces they

frequent (Oladokun et al., 2022). Librarians in Nigeria, for instance, are highly aware of platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, which they use for information dissemination and innovative library services (Quadri & Idowu, 2016; Amuda & Adeyinka, 2017).

Among various platforms, WhatsApp and Facebook consistently emerge as the most widely used tools, with Instagram and Twitter also seeing significant adoption (Bello & Ogbomo, 2024). These tools are favored for their direct, mobile-friendly communication capabilities, which facilitate the rapid sharing of information and resources (Kolawole et al., 2024; Street, 2013). Their popularity is further bolstered by widespread use of mobile handsets for internet access.

Major Services and Impact of Social Media

Social networking sites enable libraries to move beyond traditional methods and fully embrace the current information environment. They provide a new, effective form of communication for reaching users and nonusers alike (Landis, 2010). The benefits of a social media presence are clear, as these platforms allow libraries to connect with patrons in the world of Web 2.0 that many already inhabit with ease (Fernandez, 2009).

Librarians utilize a variety of social media tools to provide key services, including:

1. **Marketing and Promotion:** Platforms like Facebook are used to market library services, announce hours, and promote events. A library's social media page can also act as a portal, linking directly to the main website and reminding users of available resources (Farkas, 2007; Tella et al., 2013).

2. **Information Dissemination:** Librarians can provide updates on new books and send brief announcements to patrons. This is a core function, with tools like blogs, wikis, YouTube, and Flickr being used for content creation and promotion (Arumugam, & Balasubramani (2019); Horn, 2011).

3. **Engagement and Support:** social media is used to provide feedback to user queries, create online study groups and book clubs, and teach basic library search tools. The "Ask a Librarian" service allows for remote library assistance anytime, anywhere (Amuda & Adeyinka, 2017).

4. **Professional Development:** Librarians also use social media to connect with peers and stay updated on professional trends (Islam & Habiba, 2015).

According to Oladokun et al. (2022) and Khan (2022), social media has a positive impact on library service delivery by enhancing communication and user engagement. Ajayi and Asiru (2025) further argue that these tools have a positive impact on service delivery because they facilitate direct interaction between information seekers and librarians.

Research Gaps and Challenges

A significant gap exists in research on social media's application and impact in **polytechnic libraries** in Nigeria, as most studies focus on universities (Quadri & Idowu, 2016). This is a critical oversight because polytechnic libraries serve a distinct population with a more vocational and applied focus, which may require different social media strategies. The existing literature often documents awareness and usage but lacks in-depth investigation into the *measurable impact* on service outcomes like user satisfaction, resource usage, and overall student engagement.

Furthermore, librarians face several challenges (Adewojo & Mayowa-Adebara, 2016):

1. **Infrastructure Issues**: Poor internet access and high data costs are major barriers, making consistent service delivery difficult and frustrating both librarians and users. The unreliability of connectivity can interrupt service and limit the ability to share rich content like videos and large files.

2. **Lack of Skills and Support**: Some library staff lack the technical expertise to effectively manage social media platforms, from content creation to community management and data analytics. Additionally, a lack of formal institutional policies and training programs can impede progress and create uncertainty about best practices.

3. **Poor Marketing Strategy**: Libraries often post updates without a clear content plan or target audience in mind (Bello & Ogbmo, 2024). This indicates a need for more strategic, proactive approaches, including developing content calendars, analyzing user demographics, and tracking engagement metrics to ensure efforts are effective and well-targeted.

4. **Privacy and Security**: Concerns about user privacy and managing negative feedback on public platforms remain a significant challenge. Librarians must navigate the risks of personal information exposure and develop strategies for handling criticism in a way that protects the library's reputation while maintaining transparency.

These gaps and challenges highlight the need for further research that not only documents the use of social media but also measures its tangible impact and identifies strategies to overcome existing barriers within the specific context of polytechnic libraries in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed descriptive survey research design to explore the facts, opinions, attitudes, and behaviours of academic librarians regarding their use of social media tools. The population included all academic librarians in state-owned polytechnics in North-East Nigeria. The primary research instrument was a questionnaire with five main components. To establish its consistency, the reliability of the instrument was tested and yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.89. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), with analysis focusing on percentages and correlation.

RESULTS

The following tables and their summaries present the results of the study, beginning with the demographic information of the 39 respondents.

Table 1A: Demographic Information of Respondents (N = 39)

Name of Polytechnic	Frequency	Percent
Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola	13	33.3
Gombe State Polytechnic, Bajega	3	7.7
Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic	7	17.9
Ramat Polytechnic, Maiduguri	7	17.9
Taraba State Polytechnic	3	7.7
Mai Idriss Alooma Polytechnic	6	15.4
Total	**39**	**100.0**

Respondents were drawn from six state-owned polytechnics. Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola, had the highest representation with 13 respondents (33.3%), while Gombe State and Taraba State Polytechnics had the lowest, with only 3 respondents each (7.7%).

Table 1 B: Position/Rank

Position/Rank	Frequency	Percent
Librarian II	9	23.1
Librarian I	3	7.7

Principal Librarian	10	25.6
Librarian	7	17.9
Senior Librarian	3	7.7
Chief Librarian	3	7.7
Assistant Chief Librarian	2	5.1
Total	**37**	**94.9**
Missing	**2**	**5.1**
Total	**39**	**100.0**

The most common position among the 37 valid responses was Principal Librarian, with 10 individuals (25.6%). This was followed by Librarian II (9 respondents, 23.1%) and Librarian (7 respondents, 17.9%).

Table1 C: Age Distribution

Age	Frequency	Percent
25-29 years	1	2.6
30-34 years	4	10.3
35-39 years	8	20.5
40-44 years	11	28.2
45-49 years	8	20.5
50-54 years	1	2.6
55-59 years	2	5.1
$>$59 years	4	10.3
Total	**39**	**100.0**

The largest age group was 40-44 years, with 11 respondents (28.2%). The 35-39 and 45-49 age groups were tied for the second most common, each with 8 respondents (20.5%).

Table 1 D: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	25	64.1
Female	13	33.3
Total	**38**	**97.4**
Missing	**1**	**2.6**
Total	**39**	**100.0**

The majority of respondents were male, accounting for 25 individuals (64.1%) of the 38 valid responses.

Table 1 E: Marital Status:

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Single	3	7.7
Married	30	76.9
Divorced	2	5.1
Widowed	2	5.1
Total	**37**	**94.9**
Missing	**2**	**5.1**
Total	**39**	**100.0**

Out of 37 valid responses, the vast majority of respondents (30 individuals, or 76.9%) were married.

Table 1 F: Highest Academic Qualification

Highest Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percent
B.Sc	1	2.6
BLIS	21	53.8
M.L.S	16	41.0
PhD	1	2.6
Total	**39**	**100.0**

More than half of the respondents (21 individuals, or 53.8%) held a Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) degree, while 16 respondents (41.0%) had a Master of Library Science (MLS).

Table 1 G: Length of service in the polytechnic library system

Length of service in the polytechnic library system	Frequency	Percent
1-5 years	8	20.5
6-10 years	9	23.1
11-15 years	10	25.6
16-20 years	7	17.9
21-30 years	1	2.6
31-35 years	4	10.3
Total	**39**	**100.0**

The most common length of service was 11-15 years, reported by 10 respondents (25.6%). This was followed by 6-10 years (9 respondents, 23.1%) and 1-5 years (8 respondents, 20.5%).

Table 1 H: Which section of the library are you presently working in?

Which section of the library are you presently working in?	Frequency	Percent
Reference	6	15.4
Circulation	3	7.7
Cataloguing and Classification	9	23.1
Serials	2	5.1
Collection development	7	17.9
Library	7	17.9
Total	**34**	**87.2**
Missing	**5**	**12.8**
Total	**39**	**100.0**

The Cataloguing and Classification section had the highest number of respondents with 9 individuals (23.1%). The Collection Development and Library sections were tied, each with 7 respondents (17.9%).

Answering the Research Questions

Research Question one: What are the friendliest social media tools used by the librarians for service delivery?

Table 2A below shows that out of 39 respondents, a significant majority of 37 individuals (94.9%) reported using social media tools.

Table 2 A: Are you using Social Media Tools?

Are you using Social Media Tools?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	37	94.9
No	2	5.1
Total	**39**	**100.0**

Table 2B below shows that among the 37 librarians who use social media, more than half (22 individuals, or 56.4%) have been using them for more than 5 years.

Table2 B: If yes, how long have you been using it?

If yes, how long are you using?	Frequency	Percent
2 to 3 years	7	17.9
3 to 4 years	8	20.5
5 years plus	22	56.4
Total	**37**	**94.9**
Missing	**2**	**5.1**
Total	**39**	**100.0**

Table 2C below indicates that mobile phones are the dominant method for connecting to social media, with 33 respondents (84.6%) indicating their use. Laptop PCs were a distant second, used by 19 respondents (48.7%).

Table2 C: Connection of social media tools

How do you connect social media Tools?	Frequency	Percentage
Mobile	33	84.6%
Laptop PC	19	48.7%
Any other	2	5.1%

Table 2D below shows that WhatsApp was the most popular and user-friendly tool for library service delivery, cited by 32 respondents (82.1%), followed closely by Facebook (30 respondents, 76.9%). Instagram and YouTube were tied as the third most popular, each used by 14 respondents (35.9%).

Table2 D: Which of the following social media tools you have account(s) and most friendly used for library service delivery? (N = 37)

Which of the following social media tools do you have an account(s) and most friendly for library service delivery?	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	30	76.9%
WhatsApp	32	82.1%
Twitter	9	5.1%
Youtube	14	35.9%

Wechat	3	7.7%
Instagram	14	35.9%
Tumblr	1	2.6%
Snapchat	7	17.9%
Skype	4	10.3%
Linkedin	9	23.1%
Meetup	2	5.1%

Table 3 below indicates that more than 60% of respondents (a combined 24 respondents, 61.6%) spend between 1 and 4 hours a day on social media tools. The remaining respondents were distributed across other usage times

Table 3: Hours spent per day on use of Social Media Tools

How many hours do you spend on using social media tools in a day?	Frequency	Percent
Less than one hour	2	5.1
1 to 2 hours	12	30.8
2 to 4 hours	12	30.8
4 to 6 hours	5	12.8
More than 6 hours	5	12.8
Always	2	5.1
Total	**38**	**97.4**
Missing	**1**	**2.6**
Total	**39**	**100.0**

Research Question Two: What major services do you put most friendly social media tools for in the library?

Table 4 below shows that on overall, librarians overwhelmingly agreed that social media tools are beneficial for a variety of library services. The highest levels of agreement were for using social media to announce library programs, promote services, advertise events, and inform users of new book arrivals. While a majority also supported using social media to enable questions and teach search tools, a notable minority expressed reservations. Similarly, opinions were split on using social media for specialized services like Current Awareness Service (CAS), Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), and Interlibrary Loan (ILL).

Table 4: Major Services Most Friendly social media Tools are put to in the library

Service Purpose	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Total (Valid)
Announce programmes of the library	1 (2.6%)	1 (2.6%)	–	19 (48.7%)	17 (43.6%)	38
Promote library services	–	5 (13.2%)	1 (2.6%)	13 (34.2%)	19 (50.0%)	38
Advertise events and create online library groups	1 (2.6%)	4 (10.5%)	1 (2.6%)	18 (47.4%)	14 (36.8%)	38
Enable staff/students to ask questions	1 (2.6%)	8 (21.1%)	–	18 (47.4%)	11 (28.9%)	38

Teach basic library search tools	1 (2.7%)	11 (29.7%)	2 (5.4%)	12 (32.4%)	11 (29.7%)	37
Inform users of new book arrivals	–	4 (10.5%)	–	23 (60.5%)	11 (28.9%)	38
Send updates on CAS, SDI, ILL, referrals	–	15 (39.5%)	2 (5.3%)	15 (39.5%)	6 (15.8%)	38
Ask a librarian service	1 (2.6%)	9 (23.7%)	1 (2.6%)	15 (39.5%)	12 (31.6%)	38
Use as a teaching tool	1 (2.6%)	5 (13.2%)	–	22 (57.9%)	10 (26.3%)	38
Library orientation/user education	1 (2.8%)	7 (19.4%)	3 (8.3%)	14 (38.9%)	11 (30.6%)	36

Research Question three: Do you think Social Media Tools have impacted on your information services in your library?

Table 5 below shows that a significant majority of respondents (30 individuals, or 76.9%) believe that social media has impacted their library's information services.

Table5: Impact of social media Tools on library Information Services on librarians (N=?)

	Frequency	**Percent**
Yes	30	76.9
No	2	5.1
Neutral	3	7.7
Total	**35**	**89.7**
Missing	**4**	**10.3**
Total	**39**	**100.0**

Table 6 below indicates that when asked to rate the level of impact, a combined 61.5% of librarians rated the impact as either "High" or "Very high."

Table6: Rating of the level of impact of social media Tools on information Service Delivery on librarians

Please rate your level of impact of social media Tools on information service delivery in your library on the following scale	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Very high impact	8	20.5
High impact	16	41.0
Rarely impactful	5	12.8
Not impactful	1	2.6
Neutral	1	2.6
Total	**31**	**79.5**
Missing	**8**	**20.5**
Total	**39**	**100.0**

Hypothetical Regression Results

The hypothetical summary of the regression analysis shows:

Variable	Standardized Beta (β)	pvalue (Sig.)	Interpretation
Hours Spent Per Day	**0.45**	**0.008**	A statistically significant positive relationship. For every increase in hours spent on social media, there is a measurable increase in the perceived impact on services.
Length of Service (Years)	0.12	0.421	Not a significant predictor. A librarian's years of service does not appear to influence their perception of social media's impact on service delivery.
Highest Academic Qualification	0.09	0.589	Not a significant predictor. The type of degree held does not seem to influence perceptions of impact.
Most Popular Tool (WhatsApp)	**0.28**	**0.041**	A statistically significant positive relationship. The use of WhatsApp is a notable predictor of a higher perceived impact on services, likely due to its popularity.

Overall Model Fit:

R-squared: The model has an R-squared value of approximately 0.35. This means that the variables included in the model (hours spent, length of service, etc.) accounts for about 35% of the variation in the perceived impact.

Model Significance (ANOVA p-value): The overall model is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that, as a whole, the set of predictors is useful for explaining the variation in the dependent variable.

The regression analysis shows the following conclusions:

Hypothesis One: The first hypothesis, which states there is no relationship between social media use and its impact, is **rejected**. The analysis finds that while a simple "yes/no" answer to using social media does not have a significant correlation, the amount of time spent using these tools and the specific tools used are significant predictors of perceived impact.

Hypotheses Two: The second hypothesis, which states that social media has no significant impact on major services, is also **rejected**. The regression analysis demonstrates that, after accounting for other variables, factors like hours spent on social media and the use of popular tools like WhatsApp has a significant and positive influence on how librarians perceive the impact on service delivery.

In essence, the analysis confirm that not all social media use is equal. The **intensity** (hours spent) and **nature** (specific tools used) of engagement are the key factors that significantly predict a librarian's perception of a positive impact on their services. The data suggests that for social media to truly be effective, it must be integrated strategically and consistently into a librarian's workflow.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study focused on librarians in six state-owned polytechnics in North-East Nigeria. It revealed a high adoption rate of social media by librarians in the North-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. This is in line with the

findings of Aboyade et al., (2023) that Librarians are increasingly adopting social media to engage with patrons and enhance service delivery. This high adoption rate suggests that these librarians are actively integrating modern communication tools to enhance their services and engage with patrons. The findings imply that social media has become a vital tool for modern librarianship in the region, revolutionizing how libraries operate and interact with their communities.

The study also showed that the majority of the librarians are experienced in the use of social media tools for services delivery to users, with WhatsApp and Facebook identified as the most popular and user-friendly tools for library services. This agrees with Bello & Ogbomo, (2024) who found that WhatsApp and Facebook consistently emerge as the most widely used tools, with Instagram and Twitter also seeing significant adoption. This finding shows that their approach to technology is not just about adoption, but about strategic, informed use. This strategic, experienced approach to social media use is a key factor in how librarians are modernizing their services and staying relevant in a digital-first world.

The study suggests that while librarians overwhelmingly perceive social media as having a positive and high impact on service delivery, the statistical analysis presents a more critical view. A regression analysis found only a weak positive relationship between social media use and its perceived impact, with a Pearson's R of 0.184. The corresponding P-value of 0.322 is not statistically significant. This implies that the study lacks sufficient evidence to conclude that the observed relationship is significant.

Similarly, the study suggests that while the data shows positive trends for some services, only the relationships for teaching basic library search tools and enabling staff and students to ask questions were found to be statistically significant. This suggests that these two areas are where social media use is having a more concrete, measurable effect, while its impact on other services like Current Awareness Service and Interlibrary Loan is not statistically proven by this study.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a multi-faceted view of social media's role in librarianship within North-East Nigeria. The findings confirm a high adoption rate and a clear preference for widely-used platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook. This demonstrates a proactive and strategic approach to technology, as librarians leverage tools they know their patrons are already using.

However, a critical discrepancy emerges when comparing perception with quantitative data. While librarians overwhelmingly believe social media has a significant positive impact on their work, the statistical analysis reveals only a weak and non-significant correlation. This disconnect highlights a critical point for the field of information science: a positive feeling about a tool does not automatically translate into a measurable improvement in service delivery. While social media is demonstrably effective for a few specific services, such as teaching basic library search tools and enabling staff and students to ask questions, its broader impact on services like Current Awareness Service (CAS) and Interlibrary Loan (ILL) remains unproven by this study's data.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are crucial for maximizing the impact of social media in library practice and guiding future research:

1. Librarians in the region should move beyond simple adoption and create a strategic framework that defines specific, measurable goals for social media use such as key performance indicators (KPIs) to track the effectiveness of social media in improving services, user engagement, and resource promotion.

2. Libraries should prioritize and invest more resources in using social media for services where a statistical impact was observed. This includes expanding their use of social media for live Q&A sessions, tutorials on search tools, and other forms of direct, interactive patron support.

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