
Use of social media in knowledge management practices in university libraries in south east Nigeria**Information Impact:**Journal of Information and Knowledge Management
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ISSN: 2360 – 994X (e-version)**Oyemike Victor Benson***Federal Polytechnic, Nekede, Owerri, Nigeria***Nkechi M. Amaechi***Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Nigeria***Charis O. Onuoha***Federal Polytechnic, Nekede, Owerri, Nigeria.***Linda Ihechikwere Anyalabechi***Chukwuemeka Odimegwu University Teaching Hospital, Amaku, Awka, Nigeria***Abstract**

The aim of the paper is to examine the level of awareness and use of social media in knowledge management practices in university libraries. The study is guided by three (3) objectives: to identify social media tools used in knowledge management (KM) practices; ascertain areas of knowledge management practices where social media are applied and identify challenges associated with integrating social media into knowledge management practices in university libraries with reference to South East Nigeria. Data for the study was generated through questionnaires that were administered to practicing librarians in university libraries. Findings revealed that knowledge management (KM) are practiced in the surveyed libraries. The most predominant form of KM is knowledge organization (97.6%), followed by knowledge dissemination (92.6%). Most university libraries in the three states surveyed are yet to appreciate and integrate social media into knowledge management practices. Low bandwidth/slow internet connectivity, inadequate power supply and availability of too many social media tools to learn among others are the major factors affecting the use of Social Media in knowledge management in the surveyed university libraries. This paper concludes that knowledge management is an evolving phenomenon in the information and knowledge industry.

Keywords: Awareness, knowledge management, social media, south east, university libraries, Nigeria

Introduction

Emerging technologies such as social networking applications, web based forums, wikis, blogs which are often referred to as web 2.0 technologies, are transforming the way people share knowledge and ideas with each other (Dave & Koskela, n.d.). Emphasis on knowledge management has resulted from the economics, industrial and cultural development adding competitive value to products and services by the application of human knowledge (Chandran & Raman, 2009). Knowledge management is the deliberate and systematic coordination of an organization's people, technology, processes, and organizational structure in order to add value through reuse and innovation.

This is achieved through the creating, sharing, and applying knowledge as well as through the feeding of valuable lessons learned and best practices into corporate memory in order to foster continued organizational learning. Businesses are now realizing the importance of knowledge management systems as a critical success factor in today's dynamic borderless society (Chandran & Raman, 2009). As aptly underscored by Smith (2001:311) throughout recorded history, some form of written language has been used to document their "know-what" or explicit knowledge. Pursuits of tacit, explicit and self-knowledge, self-renewal and innovation are timeless, endless and relentless. Knowledge management has existed for a long time, since people

frequently come across and uses different forms of common wisdom which they acquired from one large-scale, social collaborative knowledge process (Dave & Koskela, n.d.). Knowledge management is an interdisciplinary field that draws a variety of business activities and academic specialization (Alegbeleye, 2010). Knowledge management focuses on knowledge processes, knowledge creation, acquisition, refinement, storage, transfer, sharing and utilization (King, 2009).

KM comprises practices involving various activities which encompass theories, models, processes and technologies that support the protection, development, and exploitation of knowledge assets. Knowledge management is now recognized as an organization's most valuable asset and must be managed in different ways unlike other resources because knowledge is a complex asset ((Haslinda & Sarinah, 2009; Mosoti & Masheka, 2010).

Though it is well acknowledged that social media tools have the capacity to transform the provision of library and information services in the knowledge economy, the extent to which libraries in developing countries are integrating social media tools to knowledge management practices is yet to be established based on empirical evidence. It is against this background that this study was carried out to investigate the use of social media tools in knowledge management practices in university libraries in southeast Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The study is guided by three (3) objectives.

- To establish knowledge management practices applied in the university libraries in southeast Nigeria.
- To identify social media tools used in knowledge management practices in the university libraries in southeast Nigeria.
- To identify challenges associated with integrating social media tools (SMTs) in knowledge management practices in university libraries.

Literature review

Knowledge management has been described by Fontaine and Lesser (2002) as the ability of an organization to create, share

Having an effective knowledge management system would help the library in creating and sharing knowledge. Every organization has a slightly different knowledge base and organizational culture. Che, Tasmin, Takala and Norazlin (2012:3) contends that academic libraries as constituents of the parent institution should rethink and explore ways to improve their services and become learning organizations in which to discover how to capture and share tacit and explicit knowledge within the library. Knowledge management (KM) enables effective collaboration by ensuring the efficient and timely flow of knowledge throughout the organizations, it narrows the gap between relevant information required and possessed

and use the collective knowledge of its products, processes, and people to increase workplace productivity and reduce activities that” reinvent the wheel”. Knowledge management according to King (2009) is a set of relatively new organizational activities that are aimed at improving knowledge, knowledge-related practices, organizational behavior and decisions and organizational performance.

The rationale for knowledge management can be inferred from the assertion of Smith (2001:311) *Valuable human and knowledge resources will be wasted unless management openly accepts and supports efforts to gather, sort, transform, record and share knowledge. Priceless knowledge will continue to be lost unless organizations make better use of their prime resources - relatively unchallenged creative people who are eager to apply their knowledge.*

(Prevou, 2011). Through KM, organizations seek to acquire or create potentially useful knowledge and to make it available to who can use it at a time and place that is appropriate for them to achieve maximum effective usage in order to positively influence organizational performance (King, 2009). Bhojaraju (2005) suggested that KM in the organization helps in acquiring, storing and utilizing knowledge for problem-solving, dynamic learning, strategic planning, and decision-making, of which the library is not an exception. This to him also prevents intellectual assets from decay, adds to firm intelligent and provides increased flexibility.

Technology according to Smith (2001) plays a key role in collecting and codifying knowledge for distribution. It is important to have a strong information technology (IT) framework to design and implement the systematic storage and dissemination of information. King (2009) stressed that organizational culture is believed to influence the knowledge-related behaviors of individuals, teams, organizational units and overall organizations because it importantly influences the determination of which knowledge is appropriate to share, with whom and when. Quadri and Idowu (2014) in their survey on use of social media for information dissemination by libraries in some federal university libraries in southwest Nigeria reveals that librarians have preference for facebook, Google + and twitter over other social media

Integrating social media tools into knowledge management practices in libraries and information centers are not without challenges. As observed by Quadri and Idowu (2014), in spite of the enormous advantages of the social media in library information dissemination, researchers have continuously raised issues such as poor awareness of librarians to social media, poor infrastructures, low bandwidths e.t.c as hindrances to effective use of social media

in Nigeria. As pointed out by Prevou (2011), effective knowledge management requires high human-to-human interaction and helps eliminate barriers by networking the hierarchy of an organization and by helping knowledge flow from its smile through the organization. Fontaine & Lesser (2002) pointed out that by avoiding the pitfalls that frequently befall knowledge management efforts, firms can more effectively apply their knowledge to reduce costs, better serve their customers and gain a distinct competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Methodology

The study was undertaken in the southern part of Nigeria. Federal and state-owned universities were selected from the south-eastern states in Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. A purposive sampling method was used to select 100 practicing librarians from the selected libraries. The questionnaire was used to collect data based on three research questions formulated in line with the objectives of the study. The generated data was analyzed using simple frequencies counts. Below is the table showing the various institutions and the number of questionnaires retrieved.

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S/No.	Name Of University	Number of Questionnaires Retrieved
1	Abia State University, Uturu, Abia State	10
2	Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO)	21
3	Imo State University, Owerri	9
4	The Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUAU)	
5	University of Nigeria Nsukka	30
	Total	85

Findings and discussion

questionnaire are hereby presented as follows:

The results and findings of the study based on data generated from the

Table 1: Knowledge management practice

	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Knowledge acquisition	61	71.8%
2.	Knowledge capturing	49	57.6%
3.	Knowledge organization	83	97.6%
4.	Knowledge dissemination	79	92.9
5.	Knowledge preservation	77	90.6
6.	Knowledge sharing	76	89.4
7.	Knowledge creation	66	77.6
8.	Knowledge transfer	71	84.2

From table 1, 61 (71.8%) of the participants affirmed that knowledge acquisition is practiced in their libraries. There is an indication that knowledge dissemination 79 (92.9%), knowledge preservation 7 (90.6%). Knowledge sharing

management is practiced in all the libraries surveyed as all the items (1-8) scored above 50%. Knowledge organization is leading with 97.6%, followed by knowledge

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has a score of 76 (89.4%). 66 (77.6%) of the participant also affirmed that knowledge creation is practiced in their libraries.

Table 2: Social media used in knowledge management practices

	Social Media	Frequency	Percentage
A	Facebook	63	74.1
B	Slideshare	26	30.6
C	Youtube	12	14.1
D	Blogs	40	47.1
E	Wikis	29	34.1
F	Whatsapp	67	78.8
G	Flickr	11	12.9
H	Twitter	22	25.8
I	Podcasts	15	17.6
J	Instant messaging	37	43.5
K	Online Discussing Forum	29	34.1
L	LinkedIn	14	16.5

From table II, 63 (74.1%) of the participating librarians affirmed that they use facebook in knowledge management practice, 67 (78.8%) indicates that their library uses WhatsApp in knowledge management. All the other items in the table

have a score below 50%. The findings, therefore, reveals that most university libraries in the three states surveyed are yet to appreciate and integrate social media tools (SMTs) into knowledge management practices.

Table 3: Factors affecting use of social media in knowledge management

S/N	Variables	SA (4)	A (3)	SD (2)	D (1)	Total	Mean	Decision
1.	Low bandwidth / slow internet connectivity	33 (132)	45 (135)	4 (8)	3 (3)	85 (278)	3.27	Accepted
2.	Time constraint	9 (36)	29 (87)	2 (4)	45 (45)	85 (172)	2.02	Rejected
3.	Lack of ICT skills	10 (40)	22 (66)	5 (10)	48 (48)	85 (164)	1.93	Rejected
4.	Lack of privacy	6 (24)	24 (72)	18 (36)	37 (37)	85 (169)	1.99	Rejected

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5.	Unwillingness of libraries to adopt use of SMT in knowledge management	6 (24)	24 (72)	8 (16)	47 (47)	85 (248)	2.92	Accepted
6.	Lack of knowledge about social media tools	18 (72)	36 (108)	8 (16)	23 (23)	85 (159)	1.81	Reject
7	Inadequacy of technical skills among librarians	17 (68)	54 (162)	4 (8)	10 (10)	85 (248)	2.92	Accepted
8.	Conservative culture in adopting new technology	11 (44)	47 (141)	2 (4)	25 (25)	85 (214)	2.52	Accepted
9.	Poor perception of the potentials of social media tools	14 (56)	44 (132)	2 (4)	25 (25)	85 (217)	2.55	Accepted
10.	Lack of supportive policies	21 (84)	32 (96)	3 (6)	29 (29)	85 (215)	2.53	Accepted
11.	Low interest of librarians in learning and utilization of SMTs	16 (64)	46 (138)	3 (6)	20 (20)	85 (228)	2.68	Accepted
12.	Poor institutional support for staff ICT literacy training	11(44)	35(105)	4(8)	35(35)	85(192)	2.26	Accepted
13.	Lack of internet access	23 (92)	22 (66)	6 (12)	34 (34)	85 (204)	2.40	Rejected
14.	Lack of time to use social media	13 (52)	19 (57)	10 (20)	43 (43)	85 (172)	2.02	Rejected
15.	Availability of too many social media to learn	35 (140)	29 (87)	8 (16)	13 (13)	85 (256)	3.01	Accepted
16.	Organizational policy	15 (60)	36 (108)	25 (50)	9 (9)	85 (227)	2.67	Accepted
17.	Inadequate power supply	27 (108)	43 (129)	14 (28)	1 (1)	85 (266)	3.13	Accepted

From table 3, low bandwidth/slow internet connectivity (3.27), inadequate power supply (3.13), and availability of too many social media tools to learn (3.01) had a mean score of 3.00 and above. In other words, these are the major factors affecting the use of SMTs in knowledge management in the surveyed university libraries. Other

identified factors include variables in item number 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 16 that has a mean score above 2.50 but below 3.00.

It is clear that knowledge management is practiced in the surveyed libraries. The most predominant form of KM is knowledge organization (97.6%), followed by knowledge dissemination

(92.6%). All the other items i.e. knowledge sharing, knowledge transfer, knowledge acquisition and knowledge capturing has an average score above 50%. This is not surprising considering that the fundamental philosophy behind establishing university libraries is to help the parent institution in the process of teaching, learning, and research which ultimately births knowledge creation and dissemination. It is obvious that university libraries in the states surveyed have not fully integrated social media tools to knowledge management practices. The survey data reveals that 67 (78%) of the participants affirmed that Whatsapp is used in KMP. Also, 63 (74.1%) indicates that facebook is used in KMP. These findings seems to corroborate the findings of Quadri & Idowu (2014) that librarians in university libraries have preference for Facebook, Google+ and twitter over other social media.

The participants were presented with various variables that are likely to affect usage of social media in knowledge management to some degrees. Using a Likert scale of 4 namely: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D). It is obvious that items 1, 15 and 17 has a mean score of 3.00 points. Low bandwidth /slow internet connectivity has the highest mean of 3.27, followed by an inadequate power supply (3.13) and availability of too many social media to learn (3.01). Other variables such as item 7, 11, 6, 9, 10, 8 also had a mean score above 2.50 and below 3.00 and were accepted.

However, variables under item 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 13 and 14 were rejected because they score below 2.50.

Conclusion and recommendations

Knowledge management is an evolving phenomenon in the information and knowledge industry, it is, therefore, imperative that as library and information practitioners embrace it, they should be conversant with various tools that can be integrated into the sustainable knowledge management practices in academic libraries. The implications of the findings of this paper are that there is a low level of utilization of social media tools (SMTs) in knowledge management practices in the universities in the southeast of Nigeria. There is a clear indication that the universities surveyed are keeping to the mandate for which they were established as the fact that all the knowledge management variables are practiced in these universities. This research shows there is a need for re-alignment with modern trends of knowledge management practices as facebook and Whatsapp alone cannot be used in knowledge management practices. Other social media tools like Youtube, Slideshare, Blogs, Podcasts etc are viable platforms that should be explored by university libraries in the southeast of Nigeria. It is imperative that librarians in the university libraries in southeast Nigeria should extensively embrace social media tools in their knowledge management considering its cost effective characteristics. No doubt the level of integration of SMTs may be low but indications emerging from the study show that the university libraries in southeast

Nigeria are gradually migrating towards that direction.

The following recommendations were made in line with the findings of the study.

i. *Increased bandwidth / improved internet connectivity:* Most ICT-based services like the use of social media tools cannot be effective with poor internet connectivity. Therefore, the government and heads of institutions should endeavor to put proactive measures in place that can help to improve the efficiency level of internet connectivity.

2. *Steady power supply should be provided in these libraries:* This can be achieved by installing a standby power generating sets in the library.

3. *Training of librarians on the application of various social media into library practices:* The availability of too many social media instead of being a threat should be an advantage to librarians. Training of librarians would also enable librarians to acquire the requisite skills needed to integrate SMTs to knowledge management practices. This would further help to re-orientate librarians and change their perception about the use of social media in library practice. Training would further help to awaken the interest of librarians in applying social media to knowledge management practices.

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