

# **Review Article**

## **Library and Social Integration**

### **ABSTRACT**

This study was designed to examine the role of social media as a tool in the library for social integration. Social integration is the process during which newcomers or minorities are incorporated into the social structure of the host society. Social integration, together with economic integration and identity integration are three main dimensions of newcomers' experiences in the society that is receiving them. Social Media's presence is almost everywhere and the vision of the library within the last few years has been that library services should go to users not necessarily that users should come physically to the library. Social Media is expected to be a veritable tool in achieving this purpose. The study revealed that; privacy concern, low levels of technology penetration, network problem, lack of awareness, lack of funds etc. as the major challenge librarians encounter in the use of social media for promoting library and information services and enhancing social integration. It also concluded that the integration of the society via social media technology into library services is more than a management strategy; it is a tool that can be deployed to transform library services and bring cutting edge services to users in the face of dwindling budgets. And the finally this paper recommends that Libraries should design their services in such a way that they will fully employ the sharing capacity of social media tools towards provision and dissemination of their services to users, as this capacity is still currently underutilized and that Libraries should formulate a viable Social Media Policy to guide the full integration of social media tools to the provision of library services in public libraries so as to facilitate social integration.

**Keywords: Libraries, Social Integration, Social Media Technology.**

### **1.0. INTRODUCTION**

The Mid nineteenth century witness a revolution in Information communication technology phenomenon; gradually today ICT is forcing the biggest change in the way people live since the automobile. Its emergence forces new infrastructure cum mass production, spawns new businesses, and threatens the status quo of everything that existed before it. It is very useful tool that will continue to experience new development as time passes. In higher education environment today, libraries have been among the first in academic unit to be shaken to its philosophical foundation and compelled in all ramification of its practice to embrace the deluge of information technology. This revolution clearly necessitates the need to employ social media tools to communicate the library's role in social integration.

Ezeani and Igwesi [1], observed that with the exponential growth of the use of social media such as the WhatsApp, Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, YouTube etc. it is now inevitable that librarians must learn the use of these tools to be able to socially integrate their ever growing and sophisticated patrons. Kim, Yoo-Lee and Sin [2]. in their study pointed out that as social media are gaining popularity, and some of them seem to be playing important roles as information sources. Hence, it is crucial to integrate it into library routines and services [3].

Library is the principal means where by the record of man's thought and ideas and the expression of his creative imagination are made freely available to all. It is a vital and sensitive unit in the state and so demands proper planning and organization, if it is to achieve its desire goal. Public libraries are a vital part of the civilized society [4]. It is can be described as a local centre of information making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to users. It also provides services for youths

whose areas of interest often include adventures, sports, science fiction and other fantasies. As affirmed by Enyia [5], "the thrust of public library activities is to reach out to wider population of the citizenry, improve their reading habits, their knowledge and contribution to various aspects of their daily living such as governance, source of good medicine, good schools for learning, food and water supply, electricity, recreation and improved occupational choices.

Public libraries are important and the society needs them so as to reap the benefits of a free, adequate and comprehensive flow of information absolutely essentials to break down the barriers of ignorance, prejudices and parochialism that have bedeviled the country since its independence [6]. However, despite the relevance of public libraries in the society, it is disheartening that most public libraries are considered no better than archives, lacking contemporary books, serials and audio-visual equipment of which, lack of properly trained young adult librarian is a factor [7]. Nevertheless, with the penetrating influence of information and communication technologies (ICT), public libraries like other libraries are now beginning to experience tangible and visible changes in its services offered to the clientele. This was affirmed by Kalu, Okai and Unagha [8], when referring to changes being witnessed in the library and information palace.

Change is a dynamic process that societies are exposed to, however, even when all human beings are aware that change is inevitable, only few people seemed to be prepared for the change [9]. The fundamental issue remains that how ready are libraries to explore and maximize these changes? Are these changes threat or potentials?

The various tools and platforms being deployed for the delivery of library and information services as a result of ICTs facilities are responsible for the changes being experience. One of such platform is social media. Social media integration to library services allow librarians to reach out to users in a familiar interface, provide users with instruction research help and the opportunity to have their voices heard. Social media is gradually becoming part of people's everyday lives. With social media as a normal part of the everyday lives of young adult, libraries have begun to use online tools to promote library services to this age group [10]. According to Quadri and Idowu [11], social media as a web-based channel of information dissemination is rapidly permeating all aspects of library and information services to other remote users. Arguably, it is now becoming the most preferred means of establishing social/professional networks among librarians, while it is also being used to communicate with potential library users in achieving social integration, as well as extending the information services to other remote users.

## **2.0. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Social integration is the process during which newcomers or minorities are incorporated into the social structure of the host society .Social integration, together with economic integration and identity integration are three main dimensions of newcomers' experiences in the society that is receiving them. A higher extent of social integration contributes to a closer social distance between groups and more consistent values and practices. Bringing together various ethnic groups irrespective of language, caste, creed, etc., without losing one's identity. It gives access to all areas of community life and eliminates segregation.

In a broader view, social integration is a dynamic and structured process in which all members participate in dialogue to achieve and maintain peaceful social relations. Social integration does not mean forced assimilation. Social integration is focused on the need to move toward a safe, stable and just society by mending conditions of social disintegration, social exclusion, social fragmentation, exclusion and polarization, and by expanding and strengthening conditions of social integration towards peaceful social relations of coexistence, collaboration and cohesion.

Integration was first studied by Park and Burgess in 1921 through the concept of assimilation. They defined it as "a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitude of other persons and groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life."

While some scholars offered an assimilation theory, arguing that immigrants would be assimilated into the host society economically, socially and culturally over successive generations, others developed a multiculturalism theory, anticipating that immigrants could maintain their ethnic identities through the integration process to shape the host society with a diversified cultural heritage.

Extending from the assimilation theory, a third group of scholars proposed a segmented integration theory, stressing that different groups of migrants might follow distinct trajectories towards upward or

downward mobility on different dimensions, depending on their individual, contextual and structural factors.

### **3.0. MEASUREMENTS OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION**

Compared with other dimensions of integration, social integration focuses more on the degree to which immigrants adapt local customs, social relations, and daily practices. It is usually measured through social network, language, and intermarriage. The most commonly used indicator of social integration is social network, which refers to the connection that immigrants build with others in the host society. While some researchers use the total number of immigrants' friends as a measure, others use the frequency of interaction with friends. One thing worthy noting is that more and more studies differentiate local friends from immigrant friends because the former is considered more important in integrating immigrants into the local society than the latter.

Language is another important variable to access the degree of immigrants' social integration. A higher level in grasping local language results in more chances to communicate with local people and a better understanding of local culture. A typical question used in survey is as "Do you understand the local people's language?" In the United States, for instance, the fluency of English is a widely used indicator and can be easily found in a report on immigration.

In many instances education is used as a mechanism for social promotion. Neither education nor work can be ensured without a form of law. In relation to tolerant and open societies, members of minority groups often use social integration to gain full access to the opportunities, rights and services available to the members of the mainstream of society with cultural institutions such as churches and civic organizations. Mass media content also performs a social integration function in mass societies.

### **4.0. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **4.1. Social Media as a Tool in the Library for Social Integration**

Social Media's presence is almost everywhere and the vision of the library within the last few years has been that library services should go to users not necessarily that users should come physically to the library. Social Media is expected to be a veritable tool in achieving this purpose.

Awoyemi [12], pointed out that as the information revolution continues to unfold, libraries will experiment with mobile devices and services to support the information needs of their users wherever they may be. The adoption of mobile technology alters the traditional relationships between libraries and their users. Through social media tools such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube information is becoming intertwined with our lives more profoundly than is the case when we sit down at a desktop or even with a laptop computer. Social Media's presence is almost everywhere and the vision of the library within the last few years has been that library services should go to users not necessarily that users should come physically to the library.

Several studies have been conducted on how libraries are using social media and use of social media tools among Nigerian undergraduates and so on but most of these studies have been in the university environment hence it is however necessary to note that, there is a dearth in literature as to the Integration and use of Social Media Technology in social integration in Nigeria.

Simisaye and Adeyeoye [13]. maintained that social media tools can be used in wide variety of ways and for many purposes. They however, contend that the choice of tools ultimately depends on a number of factors such as the required functionality, personal preferences as well time and digital literacy skill levels. According to Kalu, Okai and Unagha [8], libraries on their own should bring innovations to transform the society and redesign their services to meet the information, education and recreational needs of their users believing that when these are done, that it would help in attracting users back to the library.

Maisiri, Mupaikwa and Ngwenya [14], in their study using different type of libraries in the country of Zimbabwe shows that no library had a written social media strategic plan. However, their results indicate that Facebook, Wikis, YouTube, Blogs, Twitter, Skype, Flier, and LinkedIn are the social media tools adopted and use in Zimbabwe libraries. Libraries are divided on the benefits of introducing formalized social media policies and plans. They noted that about a third of libraries responding to the survey had a policy in place with over 40% having no plans to introduce one. Facebook was seen as the most effective for advancing the library profession, followed by LinkedIn while Twitter received the lowest rating. Public libraries do not have enough professionals as required and there has been little or no training for the available workers towards acquiring the necessary skill.

She further observed that adequate provisions are not made for the training of librarians in public libraries due to the lamented lack of fund.

Library staff would be the right choice to do social media as they work with their client groups. Social media systems are inexpensive and can be deployed quickly in an externally hosted environment without technical staff involvement and can run alongside existing information systems, at least during initial pilot periods.

Villoldo [15], categorically states that many of these social media technologies cost next to nothing. Using social media for marketing library and information services allows for a vast reach yet having very low cost. In fact, using social media to market library services does not cost a single kobo. A library can perform actions/activities on social media like Facebook, blogs, twitter about products and services without investing a dime. Nigerians go online (predominantly with their phones) they go basically to social media applications like Facebook, twitter, blogs and YouTube. Terragon [16], gave a statistics of social media users in Nigeria as 5,357,500. This invariably makes social media a must use by librarians in promoting library and information resources and services

The ease of posting and sharing information on Twitter makes it an essential tool for libraries to reach their users. Librarians in Nigeria can use this platform to give users firsthand information on the on-going political issues, any current affairs or burning local, national national election. Nigerians go online (predominantly with their phones) they go basically to social media applications like Facebook, twitter, blogs and YouTube. Terragon [16], gave a statistics of social media users in Nigeria as 5,357,500. This invariably makes social media a must use by librarians in promoting library and information resources and services.

Librarians in public libraries are expected to adequately exploit the opportunity offered by social media to promote library and information services. Social media tools enables libraries and information centres to communicate network and share information resources with other libraries and users as well. Social media therefore are transforming the way and manner with which public libraries provide library services.

#### **4.2. Challenges of Faced by Libraries in Adopting Social Media for Social Integration**

The main drawback to libraries adopting social media tools according to Maisiri, Mupaikwa and Ngwenya [14], includes the negative attitude of staff, both within the libraries and institutions that are served by the libraries and this to them, is because people are yet to appreciate the extent to which social media can be used for social integration. Privacy concern as the major challenge librarians encounter in the use of social media for promoting library and information services and enhancing social integration. Also, low levels of technology penetration, network problem, lack of awareness, lack of funds etc. were also identified as challenges. Also, Chitumbo and Chewe [17], sees limited Internet access points, poor Internet connectivity and limited bandwidth, lack of awareness of the existing social media, no privacy, too many social media to explore and lack of clear policy on social media tools at the implementation stage as potential challenges. The most significant challenge of using social media remains time/resource, followed by judging an appropriate tone for communications and making people aware of the library's social media activities.

#### **5.0. CONCLUSION**

The study concludes that, the integration of the society via social media technology into library services is more than a management strategy; it is a tool that can be deployed to transform library services and bring cutting edge services to users in the face of dwindling budgets.

However, evidence shows that low level of technological penetration due to inadequate funding of public libraries remains a major challenge. Challenges such as power (electricity) problem, poor internet facility, insufficient fund, Poor social media skill, incessant breakdown of ICT facilities, technophobia etc. are issues that must be looked at critically for maximum utilization of social media tool for social integration in Nigeria. Similarly, Libraries need to operate more library specific social Media platforms like you tube, Library thing, twitter, etc. to further reach their audience.

#### **6.0. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Libraries should design their services in such a way that they will fully employ the sharing capacity of social media tools towards provision and dissemination of their services to users, as this capacity is still currently underutilized.

- Libraries should formulate a viable Social Media Policy to guide the full integration of social media tools to the provision of library services in public libraries so as to facilitate social integration. The policy should be able to specify the nature and forms of services that should be provided through social media, who takes responsibility for the posting of information and resources to social media platforms. This is because, the library as an institution should not go out of the range of services that aligns with the objectives for which it was established to achieve.
- There is the need for regular trainings for the library personnel on the emerging technologies. Librarians should explore self-development opportunities to improve on their skills on how to apply social media to the provision of library services. Also, attending of conferences and workshops organized by Information Technology Section of the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) will go a long way in ensuring that librarians in public libraries are equipped with the requisite skills
- Modern ICT equipment and internet facilities should be made readily available in the libraries and institutional community. The library management can liaise with philanthropic bodies or the institutions Management and even the TETFund for the purchase of modern computers and internet subscriptions in their libraries.
- Libraries should do more in the area of available platforms; libraries should ensure that they move with the trend of information dissemination pathways in this 21st century so as to remain relevant
- Use of social media for collaboration among libraries should be improved; more libraries should embrace SM for collaboration. This can greatly improve library services as it allows for real-time deep engagement among collaborating libraries. In the face of budget cut to the library
- Enforceable policies should be formulated to govern the application and usage of social media in the libraries. Because once content is shared online, it might be very difficult to take it offline again and it will remain there for everybody to see.
- There is need for proper orientation of the undergraduates by the library in particular and other authorities in general, so that they will be duly informed that social media is not just for making friends and social interactions, that they can effectively use it solve their academic problems.
- Finance should be adequately and promptly provided by the parent institutions to further enhance the use of social media to promote library and information resources and services in the libraries.
- The rate for subscribing to the various network by Internet service providers should be subsidized bearing in mind that the users are majorly students.

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