FACTORS INFLUENCING USE OF ACADEMIC SOCIAL MEDIA IN ENHANCING RESEARCH ACTIVITIES OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATON SCIENCE EDUCATORS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

Rita O. Salami[1], Katamba A, Saka[1], Mohammed A. Bitagi[1] and Samuel J, Udoudoh[1]

[1]Federal University of Technology, Minna

Abstract

The study investigated factors influencing use of Academic Social Media (ASM) in enhancing research activities of Library and Information Science Educators (LISE) in Nigerian universities. Descriptive survey research design was used and the target population consists of 348 LISE in 37 University-Based Library Schools in Nigeria. A sample size of 258 LISE was drawn from the population using multistage sampling technique. Structured questionnaire with five-point Likert scale was designed in line with the research questions. A total of 258 copies of the questionnaire were administered on respondents (online) through their respective e-mails. Response rate showed that 190 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved. Percentage, frequency counts and mean score were used in the analysis of data. Results showed that Google scholar was the most utilised ASM and recommendations from colleagues was the most social influence factor that has influenced ASM use by LISE. In the findings of the study, it was revealed that respondents have not received adequate trainings on ASM use. The study concluded that the low level of training on academic social media use was because LISE educators have not utilise ASM platforms to search and participate in various training programmes opportunities available over the globe. The study recommended that the management of University-Based Library Schools in Nigeria should encourage LISE to patronise ASM platforms in enhancing their research activities by formulating ASM use policies in their respective institutions.

Keywords: Academic social media, Facilitating conditions, Library and Information Science Educators, Research activities and social influence

Introduction

The preoccupation of Library and Information Science, LIS, schools in Nigeria is to produce competent and knowledgeable manpower to manage the various public and private libraries and information centres in Nigeria and all over the world. Although, there has been significant growth in the number of library schools in Nigerian universities and polytechnics with increasing production of graduates but this has not positively translated to the growth of the profession. This was corroborated by Marchionini (2012) who confirmed this criticism asserting that LIS graduates fail to meet the immediate needs and requirements of current LIS work environment in the 21st Century.

To improve the training and developments of education in library schools in various universities in Nigeria, Library and Information Science Educators, LISE, are expected to engage in vigorous research activities such as information gathering, collaboration, dissemination of research findings and measurement of research impact. This becomes necessary since the major preoccupation of universities all over the world is research. For library and information science educators in Nigerian universities can only break new frontiers in the profession by engaging in quality researches. Despite the importance of research to the profession, Ononogho (2015) pointed out that most LIS professionals in Nigeria do not effectively undertake research activities that are often well reflected to address contemporary issues in the society and the profession.

In these ways, LIS issues and critical thinking are not prominent and noticeable. This may be as a result of utilisation of traditional methods in facilitating research activities such as gathering information

from print resources, finding potential collaborators from conferences attendance, and seminars, dissemination of research findings through traditional channels (journals and conference proceedings) and measuring research impacts majorly through citation counts. These methods are slow and inadequate especially in the 21st Century which evolves round the digital world. Hence, the need for LISE to incorporate digital Information Communication Technology when carrying out their research activities so as to improve the quality and quantity of their research using Academic Social Media (ASM). ASM offer similar services as that of social media. However, they are intentionally aimed to cater for the needs of the academic community especially in the area of researches. Academics, researchers and professionals mostly use ASM in communicating with friends, family and colleagues even though the technology has also been applied in enhancing research activities such as information gathering, collaboration, dissemination of research findings and measuring research impact. In the study conducted by Opesanwo and Mabawonku (2016) on the influence of social media on research productivity among faculty members in two selected universities in South West, Nigeria, it was observed that ASM platforms were underutilised by faculty members in the study area.

Several factors such as social influence (recommendation from colleagues, ASM publicity and obligation from institutions) and facilitating conditions (Knowledge on ASM use, access to fast Internet network and so on) can influence use of academic social media use. It is against this background that this study investigated factors influencing use of ASM in enhancing research activities of LISE in Nigerian universities.

Statement of the Problem

Library and Information Science Educators, LISE, in Nigeria conduct research for career progression in addition to contributing to the frontiers of knowledge and breaking new grounds. Evidence have shown that research activities of Library and Information Science Educators in Nigeria are low (Ikoji, 2018), even though research is largely an unexploited area which has the potential to help in the growth of the profession. These scenarios may be due to poor or non-utilisation of new technological tools and techniques such as the Academic Social Media, ASM, in enhancing their research activities. Hence, this study attempted to investigate the factors that influence the use of ASM in enhancing research activities of LISE in Nigerian universities.

Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To identify the types of Academic Social Media utilised by LISE in enhancing research activities in Nigerian universities;

2. To investigate the influence of social influence on use of ASM in enhancing research activities of LIS educators in Nigerian universities; and

3. To determine the influence of facilitating conditions on use of ASM in enhancing research activities of LIS educators in Nigerian universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide the conduct of study:

1. What types of academic social media are utilised in enhancing research activities of LISE in Nigerian universities?

2. What is the influence of social influence on use of ASM in enhancing research activities of LISE in Nigerian universities?

3. What is the influence of facilitating conditions on use of ASM in enhancing research activities of LISE educators in Nigerian universities?

Literature Review

In order to determine the factors that influence the use of Academic Social Media, few researches were carried out by various authors. Opesanwo and Mabawonku (2016) conducted a study on the influence of social media on research productivity among faculty members in two selected universities in South West, Nigeria. It was observed that Academic Social Media platforms were underutilised as a result of facilitating conditions such as technical and personal issues. Li and Gillet (2011) also reported on the use of social media in the research workflow of 2414 researchers all over the world. From the findings of the study, it was observed that age is a poor predictor of social media use in research. Meler and Dick (2018) investigated the extent to which social influence, effort expectancy, and performance expectation influence the use of Research Gate among 695 scientists from the following disciplines: biology, physics medicine, and neuroscience. The results also show that performance expectation and social influence have a significant influence on the use of the Research Gate by respondents.

In the same vein, Onuoha et al (2021) determined the use of social media as a collaborative tool for research among library and information science professionals in Nigeria. The findings revealed that facilitating conditions such as lack of knowledge on social media use, low level of ICT skills among respondents hinder effective use of social media in enhancing research collaborative activities. Florante and Jamias (2013) used a survey research design to determine the use of social media at the University of Philippines, Los Barnes. The findings showed that the researcher's awareness, connectivity, research style have a significant relationship with social media use. Al-Aufi and Fulton (2014) adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the use of social networking tools for informal scholarly communication in humanities and social sciences disciplines at Sultan Qaboos University, Oman. Respondents reported that the major challenges associated with the use of social networking tools for informal scholarly communication were concerns about lack of encouragement by their institutions, security, digital literacy, lack of trainings.

Research Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate for the study for it enabled the researchers to use a sample to represent the entire population. The population of the study consists of 348 educators in 37 university based library schools in Nigeria. Multi stage sampling technique was used to select 258 Library and Information Science Educators from 28 federal, state and private universities offering library and information science in Nigeria. The population and sample size is shown in the table below.

Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The researchers administered the copies of the questionnaire to the respondents through their emails using Google form. The questionnaire was pilot-tested using a sample of 43 LISE drawn from Federal University of Technology, Minna, Babcock University, Illisan Remo and Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. 30 copies of the questionnaire were returned and correctly filled. The scores obtained from the pilot test of the instrument were subjected to reliability analysis using Crobach Alpha and had the following alpha scores: types of ASM used by LISE in enhancing research activities =0.708, influence of social influence on use of ASM in enhancing research activities of LISE =0.742 and influence of facilitating conditions on use of ASM in enhancing research activities of LISE =0.611 Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages and mean.

Table 1: Population and Sample Size

S/N	Geo- Political Zones	Universities	Total Number of LIS Educators	Sample
1	North Central	Benue State University, Makurdi	7	7
2	North Central	Federal University, Lafia, Nassarawa State	6	6
3	North Central	Federal University of Technology, Minna,	21	
4	North Central	University of Abuja, Gwagwalada, Abuja	2	2
5	Norh Central	University of Ilorin, Ilorin,	13	13
6	North East	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi	8	8
7	North East	Modibbo Adamawa University of Technology, Yola, Adamawa State	10	10
8	North East	University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri Borno State	10	
9	North West	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State	19	19
10	North West	Bayero University, Kano, Kano State	21	21
11	North West	Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Aliero	8	8
12	North West	Umaru Musa Yaradua University, Katsina, Katsina State	12	12
13	North Wrest	Yusuf MaitamaSule University, Kano, Kano State	3	
14	South East	Abia State University, Uturu	12	12
15	South East	ChukwumemekaOdumeigu University, Igbariam, Anambra State	3	
16	South East	Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki	3	3
17	South East	Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu	4	4
18	South East	Imo State University, Owerri	9	
19	South East	Madonna University, Okija Anambra State	2	2
20	South East	Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State	10	10
21	South East	NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State	11	
22	South East	University of Nigeria Nsukka, Enugu State	16	16
23	South South	Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State	10	
24	South South	Benson Idahosa University, Benin City	1	1
25	South South	Delta State University, Abraka	13	13
26	South South	Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Portharcourt, Rivers State	5	5
27	South South	Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Yenogua, Bayelsa State	8	8
28	South South	Rivers State University, Port Harcourt	10	
29	South South	University of Benin, Benin, Edo State	6	6
30	South South	University of Calabar, Calabar, Cross River State	28	28
31	South South	University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Rivers State	7	7
32	South South	University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwaibom State	7	7
33	South West	Adeleke University, Ede, Osun State	7	7
34	South West	AjayiCrowther University, Oyo State	3	3
35	South West	Babcock University, Illisan Remo, Ogun State	13	
36	South West	Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State	4	4
37	South West	University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State	16	16
	Total 37		348	258

Source: Directory of National Association of Library and Information Science Educators Members and List of Library and Information Science Schools in Nigeria (2020).

Discussion of Findings

The questionnaire was distributed among 258 respondents. However, 190 copies of the questionnaire were received and correctly filled.

Table 2: Types of Academic Social Media Utilised by LISE in Enhancing Research Activities

S/N	Statement	Frequency	Percentages (%)
1	Google scholar	144	76
2	Research gate	140	74
3	Academia.edu	121	64
4	LinkedIn	110	58
5	Open Researcher and Contributor Identifier (ORCID)	66	35
6	Mendeley	59	31
7	Impact story	21	11

8	Method space	18	9

Table 2 revealed that Google Scholar 144 (76.6%) was the most used Academic Social Media platform by respondents. This may be because it is more familiar to the respondents and a user does not need to register to have access to their information resources. It is also relatively simple, faster, and free to use. It was also observed from the findings that Method Space 18(9%) was the least most utilised academic social media platform. The low use of Method space by the majority of the respondents may be attributed to lack of awareness of the platform and the services it provides The findings are in disagreement with the findings of Collins *et al.* (2016) who in their studies found out that LinkedIn was the most widely used platform by scientists in the United State of America, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada.

Table 3: Influence of Social Influence on Use of ASM in Enhancing Research Activities of LIS Educators

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
1	My colleagues recommended academic social media utilisation	60	83	22	20	5	3.91
2	I utilise academic social media because most of my colleagues also use it	53	76	22	19	20	3.65
3	I became aware of academic social media through a conference/seminar/workshop/ webinar I attended	36	91	20	24	19	3.53
4	I received a promotional email from an academic social media platform	35	72	24	39	20	3.33
5	I am obliged by my institution to utilise academic social media platforms	7	14	11	107	51	2.05

The social influence factors as revealed from Table 3 shows that colleagues recommended the use of ASM (3.91) to majority of the respondents. Colleagues may have recommended ASM use in order to increase the number of researchers in their network. Although, Academic Social Media platforms have the potential for massive reach, it still depends on whom a researcher connects or engages with. It was also deduced from the findings that respondents were not obliged by their institutions to utilise ASM (2.05). Nigerian universities may not have obliged respondents to utilise ASM platforms as a result of lack of relevant usage policies. These findings are in agreement with that of Meler and Dick (2018) who reported that performance expectations and social influence have a significant influence on use of Research Gate by scientists.

Table 4: Influence of Facilitating Conditions on Use of ASM in Enhancing Research Activities of LISE

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
1	I have electronic device (Android phone, Tablet and a computer	76	86	18	6	4	4.18
2	I have the necessary knowledge to use Academic social media tools	86	57	17	21	9	4.00
3	I have no health issues such as poor sight and backache	53	63	18	36	20	3.49
4	I have access to fast internet network	38	45	29	55	23	3.11
5	The privacy and security of one's work is/ are protected in academic social media/	31	35	26	68	30	2.84
6	I have regular access to Internet data	22	33	29	71	35	2.66
7	I have institutional support to utilise academic social media	8	11	25	91	55	2.08
8	I have the time to constantly utilise academic social media	4	7	27	98	54	1.99
9	I have received adequate trainings on how to use academic social media	5	7	32	81	65	1.93

The results in Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents (mean=4.18) have electronic devices such as android phones, tablets and computers. Respondents may have these devices because the devices can be used for both work (research, teaching and learning) and personal life (communication

source of information and entertainment). It is worthy to note that LISE have these devices because users can only have access to various Academic Social Media through Internet technology which can only be accessed through electronic devices. The data in Table 4 also revealed that most respondents indicated that they have not received adequate trainings on how to use Academic Social Media (mean=1.98). This could be because most respondents are not aware of training opportunities in Academic Social Media use. Lack of adequate trainings on their uses may lead to limited use by LISE in enhancing their research activities. These findings are in disagreement with the findings of Onuoha et al. (2021) who reported that lack of knowledge was the factor hindering effective use of social media in enhancing research collaborative activities.

Conclusion

ASM have emerged as an important platform for LISE to enhance their research activities. The current study provided an insight on the types of ASM utilised by LISE, the influence of social influence on use of ASM and the influence of facilitating conditions on use of ASM. Findings of the study revealed that Google scholar was the most utilised ASM by respondents and Method space was the least most utilised ASM platform. The respondents also indicated that the use of social media has been influenced by the recommendation of ASM by their colleagues. The respondents also indicated that they are not obliged by their institutions to utilise ASM. The results also reveal that they have electronic devices to utilise ASM but have not received adequate trainings on how to effectively use ASM in enhancing their research activities.

Recommendations

In considerations of the findings of this study the researchers recommend that:

1. LISE should ensure they create multiple profiles in various Academic Social Media platforms and utilise them in order to have access to the various research enhancing services they provide;

2. University administrators should formulate Academic Social Media use in order to promote and encourage its use in enhancing research activities of LISE in Nigerian universities; and

3. LISE educators should utilise ASM to find and attend various training programmes available in the globe on ASM use.

References

Al-Aufi, B. & Fulton, C. (2014). Use of social networking tools for informal scholarly communication in humanities and social science disciplines. Retrieved on 8th March, 2018, from https://www.sciencedirect.com

Collins, K, Shiffman, D & Rock, J (2016). How are Scientists using Social Media in their Work Place? Retrieved 20th September, 2017, from: www.journals.plos.org

Florante, C &Jamias, S.B (2013). Scientists use of social media: The case of researchers at the university of Philippines, Los Banos. Retrieved 16th July, 2021 from www.firstmonday.org

Li , H. &Gillet D, (2013). Identifying influential scholars in academic social media platforms. Retrieved on 18th June, 2017, from: https//ieexplore.ieee.org

Marchionini G (ed) (2012). Information professionals 2050: Educational possibilities and pathways. Retrieved 16th August, 2020 from: lhttps:/sils.unc.edu/sites/default/files/publications/information/professionals-2050-pdf

Meier, A & Dick, T (2018) Survey on opinions and usage patterns for the Research gate platforms. Retrieved 20th May, 2021 from www.ncbi.nim.nih.gov

Ononogbo, R.O (2015). Contemporary issues in library and information science education: The Nigerian experience and sustainability thereof. In U. Nwokocha& M.G Ochogwu (ed) Contemporary issues in library and information science education in Nigeria (14-25) Umuahia: Zeh Communication

Onuahia, r.O; Enula, C; Obiano, J &Odeh, P. (2020). The role of social media in collaborative library and information science education: Nigerian perspective. Retrieved 20th May, 2021 from www.digitalcommons.uni.edu

Opesanwo, O &Mabawonku, I (2016). Influence of Use of Social Media on Research productivity of lecturers in two selected universities in South-West, Nigeria. Journal of Applied Information Science and Technology, 9((2)78-88