

Integration of social media into school library services for national unity and security

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Abstract

This paper presents implications of social media integration into school library services to achieve national unity and security. The concept of social media, school library services, national unity and security were reviewed. It also presents the need to integrate social media into school libraries and identified how social media can be integrated into school libraries to achieve national unity and security. The paper concludes that integration of prominent social media platforms into school library services has the capacity to remodel students attitude and create paradigm shift in their perception on national cohesion, national integration and national security. It has been suggested that School libraries should seize this golden opportunity of large user statistics of social media platforms to promote their educational and current awareness services especially on nationalism through Facebook, WhatsApp, Blog and Twitter so as to promote national unity and security. School Librarians and the school management should take advantage of the attention given to Facebook, WhatsApp, Blog and Twitter by students and use the medium for mentorship between students and teachers instead of just relying on face to face counseling which in most cases do not enjoy patronage. Students should be encouraged to become members, as this will enable them to share useful academic, economic, political and social information among themselves from across the world. School Librarians and the school authorities are hereby encouraged to make social networking a character modeling and learning platform for the attainment of national unity and security.

Keywords: National unity, National security Social media, School library, School library services,

Introduction

Social media is one of the basic practices in the life of secondary schools students. It has revolutionized the way students think and interact. Secondary school students engaged in many activities in social media platforms including establishing relationships, finding lost contacts as well as discussing issues of common interest among others. The proliferation of smartphones has made the students to be more attracted to the use of social media in their daily lives. An Internet survey conducted by Social Media and Young Adults Group (2015) reported a growing increase in the use of social media platforms among college students and the number is expected to keep on growing in the coming years.

Modern communication technologies has changed the way we communicate,

carryout research and has streamlined the way people have access to information. The use of communication technologies is no longer an option for today's learners but a proficient tool to have access to latest information. This has raised the bar on the methods School Librarians must use to engage students in global communication to increase their consciousness towards national unity and security. However, social media has far reaching positive and negative effects on the academic and social life of college students. Some of these positive effects could shape their personality, influence their character and improve on their communication skills Kim, Sin & He in (Ibrahim & Chika, 2018).

College students are comfortable in digital and social learning environment with a wider range of expectations for their

online education. The technology savvy students of this decade not only expect the use of social media, but they seek it out. To avoid using technology for the sake of technology existence, school librarians need to become as savvy as their students too. Therefore, Librarians in charge of school libraries need to apply a model of social learning that leverage these social media platforms in their libraries especially Facebook, Whatsap, Blog, Google plus, Wikipedia, LinkedIn, Reddit, Pinterest, Twitter, Instagram, Skype, Mysapce among others (Sponcil & Gitimu, 2012).

Features of social media

Social media is a collection of online communication channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. The power of social media is the ability to connect and share information with anyone irrespective of Geographical location as long as they also use social media. They are applications dedicated to forums, micro blogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation among others. Hudson (2018:3) identified the following social media common features:

- It is interactive and Web 2.0 based.
- Features user-generated profiles.
- Content is generated by users including photos, videos, conversations, comments, etc.
- Connections between users are facilitated by the platform.

Again, Gupta (2019:4-5) further stated that United States and China are the leading users of social media and presented the following prominent examples of social media platforms with global users statistics as of January 2018:

1. Facebook (2.167 billion users)
2. YouTube (1.5B)

3. WhatsApp (1.3B)
4. Facebook Messenger (1.3B)
5. Wikipedia (33.6M)
6. WeChat (980M)
7. QQ (843M)
8. Instagram (800M)
9. Tumblr (794M)
10. QZone (568M)
11. Sina Weibo (376M)
12. Twitter (330M)
13. Baidu Tieba (300M)
14. Skype (300M)
15. LinkedIn (260M)
16. Viber (260M)
17. Snapchat (255M)
18. Reddit (250M)
19. LINE (203M)
20. Pinterest (200M)
21. YY (117M)

Among the prominent examples of social media identified above, few were further described briefly by Gupta (2019:4-5) as follow:

- Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. According to statistics from the Nielsen Group, Internet users within the United States spend more time on Facebook than any other website.
- Twitter is a free micro blogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices.
- Google+ (pronounced *Google plus*) is Google's social networking project, designed to replicate the way people interact

offline more closely than is the case in other social networking services. The project's slogan is "Real-life sharing rethought for the web."

- Wikipedia is a free, open content online encyclopedia created through the collaborative effort of a community of users known as Wikipedians. Anyone registered on the site can create an article for publication; registration is not required to edit articles. Wikipedia was founded in January of 2001.
- LinkedIn is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally.
- Reddit is a social news website and forum where stories are socially curated and promoted by site members. The site is composed of hundreds of sub-communities, known as "subreddits." Each subreddit has a specific topic such as technology, politics or music. Reddit site members, also known as, "redditors," submit content which is then voted upon by other members. The goal is to send well-regarded stories to the top of the site's main thread page.
- Pinterest is a social curation website for sharing and categorizing images found online. Pinterest requires brief descriptions but the main focus of the site is visual. Clicking on an image will take you to the original source, so, for example, if you click on a picture of a pair of shoes, you might be taken to a site where you can purchase them. An image of

blueberry pancakes might take you to the recipe; a picture of a whimsical birdhouse might take you to the instructions.

School library services

A school library is a building that contains an organized collection of books and other information resources in primary and secondary schools for use by both the teachers and pupils/students. Nwakaegu & Juliet (2014) described school library as a miniaturized intellectual powerhouse or information centre found in primary schools, secondary schools and teacher training colleges. That is, it is a stepping stone towards a child's intellectual development. Jabo & Bande (2014) described them as one of the most important education services government needs to provide funds for to be established and equipped in all primary and secondary schools.

A standard school library is a sine-qua-non for qualitative primary and secondary education and an instrument for the cultivation and enhancement of reading habit through the effective use of the library resources by pupils/students. It can serve the purpose of inspiration, communication among students and the fulfillment of programme in the curriculum. The proper utilization can enable students to seek knowledge in books in order that in the process, they may become efficient and enthusiastic readers. Also, the integration of new media like computers and Internet can encourage them to become adaptive users of multimedia resources.

The National Policy on Education has it that citizens should be given lifelong education via a restructured education system to develop the practice of self learning that can make the children to become actively literate and generally well informed through the help of well equipped school libraries in primary and secondary

schools. One of the fundamental roles of the school library is to inculcate a reading habit in a child's early years. This early read agenda aims to bring together educators, parents and librarians working collaboratively to impart beneficial pre-reading skills to children which the school library provides the right environment for.

National unity and security

National unity is a state where a nation is united and lives in harmony. It connotes with national integration, nation building and social solidarity. According to Onifade and Imhonopi (2013:13), "national unity is a symbol of national development whereby government of a nation understands its people's need and choices." National unity brings about national stability by ensuring smooth implementation of socio-economic development programmes as well as national integration where various groups of people with different social and cultural background are united into one peaceful physical entity.

National unity in Nigeria context as asserted by Umaru and Usman (2015) is the acceptance of other ethnic components of Nigeria into the nationhood of Nigeria. It emphasizes the Nigerian dream, agenda and proponents. Nigerian national unity radiates around being in one accord. National unity in this context is a process that produce an omnibus of initiatives put in place by a state, its representative or institution guided by respect for the unique traditions and cultural background of ethnicities sharing the same polity with the goal of harmonizing all interest through a form of dialogue and representation and addressing differences that may be divisive and conflictual using the instrument of fairness, justice and equity in the sharing of the polity as long as the inhabitants decide to remain in the polity.

On the other hand, national security is the ability of a country to protect its citizens against internal and external threat.

Government relies on series of measures such as political, economic, military and diplomatic powers to enforce security. These security indicators may also be mobilized to build security regionally and internationally by reducing transitional causes of insecurity that could arise as a result of economic inequality, political exclusion, industrial disharmony, nuclear proliferations, social vices and climate change among others (Hamza & Lawal, 2018).

National security in Nigeria context as viewed by Jimmy (2018) refers to the security of a national state including its citizens, economy and institutions as statutory duty of the government. It is originally and widely understood to include non-military dimensions, economic security, energy security, environmental security, food security and cyber security among others. Security in Nigeria is a blend of appropriate and aggressive political resilience and maturity, human resources, economic structure and capacity, technological competence, industrial base and availability of natural resources as well as military might.

Need to integrate social media into school libraries

Integration is the bringing together of new innovations and advances into existing system. It allows the new innovation to be blended into some meaningful services or structure of the system. Integration of social media platforms into school libraries can foster hybrid learning that can foster virtual and physical learning environment. According to Ibrahim and Chika (2018), blending social media with school library can bring about the following:

- i. Open new windows for independent learning in primary and secondary schools through networking and collaboration with friends and colleagues;

- ii. Engaging in online presence to connect with the library and socialize with other online users;
- iii. Online group discussions;
- iv. Creation and demonstration of the library culture;
- v. Marketing the school library services and products to allow online users to experience the library even without being within the physical space;
- vi. Communicating with wider audience using #hashtags via library blog;
- vii. Establishing friendships in order to understand the country's situation;
- viii. Presenting on the library blog national images, video and audio clips on issues of national unity, security and national cohesion;
- ix. Encouraging the youths to become a technology savvy users of the digital technology; and
- x. The School Librarian can now use these social media platforms to interact with the students after the school hour.

On a similar development, Singla and Durga (2015) maintained that instead of using the social media for interaction and entertainment, they can be integrated into the school library to serve as information seeking tool in the context of academic, political, economic and social development. With rapid proliferation of smart gadgets social media users are increasing daily and school libraries should not be left out. Again, Ibrahim and Chika (2018) are of the view that when social media is integrated into the school library it will create some impacts to students' life either in the academic or in social life. They concluded that definitely, integration of the social media into the school library will expand the students' horizon especially in communication, behavior and academic. Hence, young people around the world are

eager to connect with their peers in personal context.

School librarians should not make use of social media only to talk about what is important to them rather than talking about national issues as well as what is important to the users. The goal should be to provide content that is relevant to your users and engage with them to the point that they want to share your post with others (Gupta, 2015). The most commonly-shared content on social media is an image; therefore, school librarian should engage in academic and national image making posts. This will dramatically increase the chances that the followers will share the post with their network. While building up a large network of followers is great, ultimately, the bottom line is to attract them no matter how many they are they share the posts with their network and so on.

How integration of social media into school library services can bring national unity and security

The social media no doubt is one of the very useful technological creations of the 21st century. Its uses are very numerous to mention so also its dark side. Ekwueme and Ugwata (2017) remarked that there is nothing too technical about how people go about abusing others on social networks. They went further by saying that secondary schools students aged between 14- 19 years old use the social media more for sharing negatively-oriented information as opposed to the positively-oriented information. That these students have more trust on social media as a news source; even most of the reports or information disseminated is not true thereby pose threats to national unity and security.

Meanwhile, integration of social media in school library services can favour national unity and security in the following ways:

- i. Helping libraries greatly in building knowledge sharing relationships

- with users (contributors) through online means;
- ii. Helping to achieve social engagement at lower levels of media observer, follower and endorser through an effective social media strategy such as the use of library's Facebook page;
 - iii. Staff participation as controlling device in online discussion groups using the school library blog to regulate regular comments and retweets;
 - iv. Thanking users for actively participating in library-sponsored events and activities;
 - v. Encouraging users to post interesting comments on articles and news items posted on the library blog to encourage other users to participate as well;
 - vi. Linking of user-submitted videos on interesting educational matters on the library blog;
 - vii. Enlightening users on the authenticity of the source(s) of information received as sometimes information the audience received from the social media site is either completely false or a doctored version of an event or an issue;
 - viii. Engaging on current awareness services on sensitive national issues to maintain national reputation;
 - ix. Providing user support mechanism (censorship) to improve user satisfaction on information received by encourage users to share information of national interest with the School Librarian to determine whether it is genuine or fake;
 - x. Participating regularly in online discussions with students on all issues and ask users to stay connected with the library comments,

It is upon this background that social media and the school library can work in harmony in order to stimulate attitudinal change in students on the way they make use of the social media and the library. For instance, information on upcoming events from the school or the library should be regularly posted on Facebook because it is the most popular social network being used by the youths. The content should be relevant and engaging for Facebook users especially issues capable of cementing national cohesion any abusive post should be discouraged. For example, photos and web links related to all library events and national culture should be included.

Twitter, blog, WhatsApp and YouTube are significant social media platforms for school library services that can be used to send out a Tweet whenever a new activity is organized or new items such as new books, periodicals, or databases are added to the library collection. It is also advisable to send regular tweets about existing services. If the library uses a regular blog, upcoming events and activities should be announced through it. To make the most of YouTube, the second most popular social network, authentic videos with real library users should be created and posted to make the videos more persuasive. Also, the links of YouTube videos should be included on all other social networks including Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp.

Social media and school library services has the capacity in building and rebranding students reputation. It is critical to monitor users' comments—both positive and negative—about the library's service on all social networks. All negative comments must be responded to promptly. To ensure this, it is important to have a social network reputation-management plan. School librarians should identify and train some group of students on how to use the social network within the guidelines so that they can monitor and mentor others for the

purpose of achieving national unity and security.

Conclusion

In the contemporary age, there are numerous social media sites available for usage among Nigerians of all classes. Many other new ones spring up, so it may not be tenable for one to know exactly all the social media channels used by secondary school students currently. This prevalence and continuous emergence of the social media sites make it very difficult if not entirely impossible for one study to cover all the social media networks available to Nigerians in the country now. Therefore, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube among others were discussed. The choice of these sites was because they are the most popular social networking or social media sites used mostly by Nigerians.

Suggestions

The paper has the following suggestions to offer:

- i. School libraries should seize this golden opportunity of large user statistics of social media platforms to promote their educational and current awareness services especially on nationalism through Facebook, Blog and Twitter so as to promote national unity and security.
- ii. School Librarians and the school management should take advantage of the attention given to Facebook, Blog and Twitter by students and use the medium for mentorship between students and teachers instead of just relying on face to face counseling which in most cases do not enjoy patronage.
- iii. Students should be encouraged to become members, as this will enable them to share useful academic,

economic, political and social information among themselves from across the world.

- iv. School Librarians and the school authorities are hereby encouraged to make social networking a character modeling and learning platform for the attainment of national unity and security.
- v. School Librarians in collaboration with the school authority should periodically organize social media talk shows where national issues will be discussed such as government policies on social media use especially on matters like hate speech, comments capable of causing social unrest, security challenges, tension and national disunity, geo-political and political gimmicks as well as religion and ethno-linguistic dichotomy.

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