

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AMONG ACADEMIC LIBRARY STAFF IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ILESA

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Abstract

This study investigates how the University of Ilesa library staff use social media as a tool for information dissemination. Data from 40 library staff members from various functional units, such as acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, serials, reference, e library, and bindery, were gathered using a descriptive survey design. Results show that social media platforms, especially Facebook (87.5% daily use) and WhatsApp (90% daily use), are widely used for internal notifications, document transfers, professional communication, and user education. Personal matters were given less priority (30%) than conference notifications (60%) and resource development updates (47.5%). The majority of library employees were HND (47.5%) and MLIS (27.5%) qualified, demonstrating their professional ability to use digital tools. However, obstacles like poor internet facilities (Mean = 3.20), unstable power supplies (Mean = 3.20), and a lack of managerial support (Mean = 3.13) limit the best use of social media. Although social media is somewhat integrated into library operations, the study concludes that in order to fully realise its potential for organised and effective information dissemination, strategic policy interventions, ongoing staff training, and infrastructure improvements are necessary.

Keywords: Social media; Information dissemination; Academic library; Library staff; University of Ilesa

1. Introduction

Academic library staff are a diverse group of employees within an academic library who collectively ensure the effective operation of the library. Professional librarians, technical services personnel, computer programmers, managers of institutional repositories, circulation clerks, and student employees fall under this category. Their responsibilities range from cataloguing, metadata assignment, materials processing, ICT support, user services, and subject liaison (Demystifying the Institution Repository for Success, 2013). Unlike the teaching faculty, library staff are obligated by their professionalism to promote academic work in all fields. They are essential components of every institution, and academic libraries depend on these employees to provide daily services that support research, teaching, and learning. Academic library staff play a crucial role in disseminating information.

According to Ukpanah and Onobrakor (2020), information dissemination is the foremost service offered by all libraries to their patrons. Most libraries in the digital era use a combination of traditional and digital strategies for effective information dissemination, employing digital tools such as online catalogues, electronic databases, library websites, email, and social media platforms to facilitate the organisation, retrieval, and sharing of information. Information dissemination seeks to bridge the gap between information providers and seekers. One of the most popular digital tools available for academic libraries to provide a dynamic and interactive platform for disseminating information in real time among library staff is social media.

According to Acharya (2018), social media is a combination of online channels relating to community based feedback, interaction, and cooperation. It is the collection of mobile and web based applications that enable the creation of knowledge and information dissemination in real time social interaction. Okeke and Asifor (2023) explained that individuals and groups can now exchange text, photos, videos, and audio. The 21st century is generally referred to as an era of information explosion, in which the internet and social media are the two notable technological advancements that have improved access to information (Kojo, Agyekum, and Arthur, 2018). Infusing social media into these information dissemination techniques makes it possible for information to reach a wider audience since we are in the digital era. Academic libraries, which link users to sources of knowledge, are extremely important to the dissemination of information in the social media context.

Examples of popular social media tools include Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, WeChat, and blogs. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) categorised social types into six groups: social networks (like Facebook and LinkedIn), blogs (like Substack and WordPress), collaborative projects (like GitHub), content communities (like YouTube and Flickr), virtual social worlds (like Second Life), and microblogs (like Twitter and Tumblr). The incorporation of social media into academic library staff practices directly supports their core function as information brokers. This makes it possible for library staff to promote events, inform patrons about new acquisitions, and provide reference assistance to distant users via library social media platforms. As a result, library staff's use of social media serves a purpose beyond simple communication; it is a strategic approach to guarantee

visibility, responsiveness, and relevance in satisfying the evolving information needs of academic communities (Sanchez, Cortijo, and Javed, 2014).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Information dissemination is an important service carried out among library staff and their users in academic libraries. Libraries generally are evolving organisms that are developing on a daily basis beyond the use of traditional tools for information dissemination, and academic library staff in this digital age are increasingly leveraging social media platforms as vital tools for information dissemination, user engagement, and service delivery. Literature has affirmed that social media sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and YouTube have improved academic library services by offering remote access to information, real time communication, and interactive engagement; however, it has been observed that the use of these tools for information dissemination among library staff in academic libraries is low and can be improved.

A factor that could be responsible for this is poor confidence, little or no technological skills of library staff in using social media. Another factor is the lack of adequate internet facilities. Reliable internet connectivity forms the backbone of digital engagement, as social media platforms require stable and high speed access to function effectively. In many academic libraries, especially in developing contexts, internet services are often characterised by slow speed, frequent downtimes, and limited bandwidth. It is against this background that the study investigates social media as a tool for information dissemination among academic library staff in the University of Ilesa.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine social media as a tool for information dissemination among library staff in the University of Ilesa. The specific objectives are to determine the types of information shared among library staff; to identify the types of social media platforms used for information dissemination; to ascertain the frequency of social media use for information dissemination; and to determine the challenges to the use of social media for information dissemination among library staff in the University of Ilesa.

2. Review of Literature

The concept of social media as a tool for information dissemination has been widely conceptualised in the literature of library and information science. It is a web based channel of information dissemination that is rapidly permitting all aspects of library and information services to remote users (Quadri and Idowu, 2014). Ezeah, Asogwa, and Edogor (2013) defined social media as modern interactive communication channels through which people connect, share ideas, experiences, pictures, messages, and information of common interest. Social media has emerged as a vital tool for library staff in academic libraries to engage their users and disseminate information in this digital age. Among students, researchers, and a large academic community, it increases visibility, makes real time communication easier, and also helps advertise library services and resources (Okeke and Asifor, 2023).

Library staff in Nigeria struggle to keep up with the evolving demands for information brought about by social media, the internet, and the World Wide Web, which necessitate creative methods of information dissemination (Akporhonor and Olise, 2015). According to research by Nwosu et al. (2011), Nigerians use social media in ways comparable to those in the United States, including networking, sharing photos and videos, chatting, and searching for information. These social media sites are being incorporated into academic services offered by library staff. Library staff extend the facilitation of library services like orientation, reference services, new arrival updates, Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), customer engagement, as well as professional networking and outreach to distant users (Agim et al., 2020; Quadri and Idowu, 2016; Sahu, 2013).

Academic libraries can use a variety of social media tools and platforms to improve service delivery, user engagement, and information dissemination. According to Chhiato (2018), library staff are constantly using popular networking platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, WeChat, WhatsApp, and blogs to improve services delivered by libraries. Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) listed main platforms frequently used in Nigerian academic libraries, including Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Blogs, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. Studies carried out across Sub Saharan Africa and Asia reaffirm Facebook's dominance, but also highlight the growing use of WhatsApp, Twitter, Zoom, and YouTube for academic purposes (Harrison et al., 2017; AlFaris et al., 2018; Niu, 2019).

Many challenges have prevented social media from being fully integrated into academic libraries, especially in developing countries like Nigeria. Privacy concerns are notable, as library staff and patrons' personal information is frequently prone to misuse, identity theft, and abuse by unauthorised individuals (Akporhonor and Olise, 2015; Sund, 2007). Adoption is hampered in Sub Saharan Africa by low levels of technological penetration, inadequate ICT infrastructure, and poor internet connection (Ezeani and Igwesi, 2012; Shehu et al., 2015). Inconsistent power supplies remain a serious problem for the delivery of digital services (Adomi, 2007; Ossai Ugbah, 2012). Some academic library staff experience technophobia or feel overpowered by rapidly evolving tools (Chamigo and Barnett Ellis, 2007; Taylor and Francis, 2015). Structural challenges that hinder long term integration include a lack of funding, unclear policies, management support, and a shortage of staff (Burclaff and Johnson, 2014; Adewojo and Mayowa Adebare, 2016).

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), originally proposed by Davis (1989). TAM posits that an individual's decision to adopt and use a technology is primarily determined by two key beliefs: perceived usefulness, which refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a particular technology will enhance their job performance, and perceived ease of use, which refers to the degree to which a person believes that using the technology will be free from effort. In the context of this study, TAM provides a useful lens for explaining why library staff at the University of Ilesa may embrace or resist social media platforms for information dissemination. Library staff who perceive social media tools such as WhatsApp and Facebook as

useful for disseminating information quickly and reaching colleagues efficiently are more likely to adopt these platforms, while those who perceive infrastructure barriers as obstacles to ease of use are less likely to integrate them into routine professional practice. The adoption patterns observed in this study, particularly the dominance of WhatsApp and Facebook and the limited use of more professionally oriented platforms such as LinkedIn and SlideShare, can be theoretically explained through the TAM framework. The TAM model is illustrated in Figure 1.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Framework (Adapted from Davis, 1989)

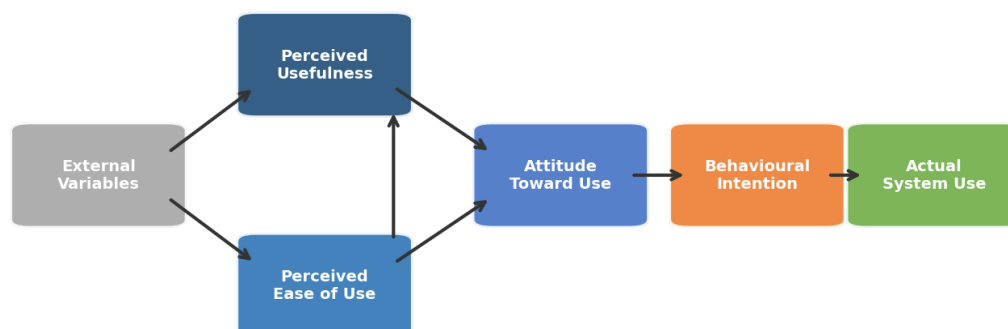


Figure 1: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Framework (Adapted from Davis, 1989)

3. Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consists of 40 library staff in Dr. Lawrence Omole Library, University of Ilesa. Due to the small size of the population, a total enumeration (census) method was used, meaning all 40 library staff members constituted the sample. The sampling frame comprised all staff across the library's functional units, including acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, serials, reference, e library, and bindery sections. A structured questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was adapted from validated instruments previously employed in similar social media adoption studies in Nigerian academic library contexts (Adewoyin, Onuoha, and Ikonne, 2017; Uche and Udo Anyanwu, 2019).

Reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = 0.81$, which exceeds the widely accepted threshold of 0.70 for adequate internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978), confirming that the instrument is reliable and suitable for the study. The questionnaire was structured on a 4 point Likert type scale. A criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted; items with mean scores above 2.50 were interpreted as indicating high perception or high usage, while items at or below 2.50 were interpreted as indicating low perception or low usage. Simple percentage, frequency count, and mean scores were used to analyse the data, processed using SPSS version 21 software.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

The demographic data of the 40 respondents are presented in Tables 1 through 5. The circulation section had the largest representation (27.5%), followed by cataloguing and classification (25.0%). These two areas constitute the library's busiest sections. Male respondents (55.0%) slightly outnumbered female respondents (45.0%), indicating a fairly balanced gender composition. The majority (62.5%) were 31 years of age or older, suggesting a mature workforce with considerable professional experience. In terms of educational qualifications, 47.5% held Higher National Diplomas (HND), followed by 27.5% with MLIS degrees, 17.5% with Bachelor's degrees, and 7.5% with SSCE qualifications. This distribution is illustrated in Figure 2.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by library section

Section	Freq.	%
Acquisition	5	12.5
Cataloguing & Classification	10	25.0
Circulation	11	27.5
Serials	5	12.5
Reference	4	10.0
E Library	3	7.5
Bindery	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by position

Position	Freq.	%
Chief Library Officer	4	10.0

Position	Freq.	%
Librarian I	11	27.5
Librarian II	8	20.0
Higher Library Officer	6	15.0
Library Assistant	9	22.5
Porter	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

Table 3. Distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	Freq.	%
Male	22	55.0
Female	18	45.0
Total	40	100.0

Table 4. Distribution of respondents by age range

Age Range	Freq.	%
21–25	3	7.5
26–30	12	30.0
31 and above	25	62.5
Total	40	100.0

Table 5. Distribution of respondents by education level

Education Level	Freq.	%
SSCE	3	7.5
HND	19	47.5
B.Sc.	7	17.5
MLIS	11	27.5
Total	40	100.0

4.2 Types of Information Disseminated

Table 6 demonstrates how staff members use social media extensively for a variety of information sharing purposes. Notifications of conferences came in first (Mean = 1.45), followed by information updates (Mean = 1.58) and resource development (Mean = 1.65). A high level of usage is indicated by these low mean scores, which are closer to 1.0. The overall decision weighted average of 1.73 supports the conclusion that social media platforms are widely used for professional communication. Personal issues were utilised less frequently (Mean = 2.08), indicating that employees prioritise professional over personal interactions on social media. This pattern is consistent with findings by Quadri and Idowu (2014), who observed that Nigerian academic librarians predominantly use social media for professional information sharing rather than personal communication. The distribution of information types is presented in Figure 3.

Table 6. Level of information dissemination on social media among library staff

Information Type	VHU (%)	HU (%)	MU (%)	NU (%)	Mean	SD
Conference notification	60.0	35.0	5.0	–	1.45	.597
Notice of meeting	42.5	45.0	12.5	–	1.70	.687
Reference query	47.5	27.5	20.0	5.0	1.83	.931
User education	47.5	35.0	17.5	–	1.70	.758
Personal issues	30.0	42.5	17.5	10.0	2.08	.944
Document transfer	32.5	52.5	12.5	2.5	1.85	.738
Information update	55.0	32.5	12.5	–	1.58	.712

Information Type	VHU (%)	HU (%)	MU (%)	NU (%)	Mean	SD
Resources development	47.5	40.0	12.5	–	1.65	.700

N = 40. VHU = Very Highly Used; HU = Highly Used; MU = Moderately Used; NU = Not Used. Decision Weighted Average = 1.73

4.3 Social Media Platforms Used

Table 7 shows that WhatsApp (Mean = 1.23) and Facebook (Mean = 1.90) are the most widely used platforms among library staff, indicating that they are the primary means of information sharing and internal communication. Virtual collaboration tools are also becoming widely accepted, as evidenced by the high usage of Zoom (1.80) and Google Meet (1.83). Instagram (2.68) and Twitter (2.50) were used less frequently. The overall decision weighted average of 2.08 indicates that library staff generally have a positive attitude toward using a variety of social media tools. The dominance of WhatsApp and Facebook aligns with findings by Adewoyin, Onuoha, and Ikonne (2017), who reported similar patterns across Nigerian academic libraries, and is consistent with the broader Sub Saharan African trend documented by Murire and Cilliers (2017).

Table 7. Level of social media platform types used among library staff

Platform	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD
WhatsApp	77.5	22.5	–	–	1.23	.423
Facebook	45.0	37.5	–	17.5	1.90	1.081
Zoom	45.0	42.5	–	12.5	1.80	.966
Google Meet	42.5	45.0	–	12.5	1.83	.958
LinkedIn	32.5	45.0	–	22.5	2.13	1.114
Blogs	27.5	52.5	–	20.0	2.13	1.042
YouTube	17.5	25.0	–	32.5	2.23	1.310
SlideShare	20.0	50.0	–	30.0	2.40	1.128
Twitter	30.0	30.0	–	40.0	2.50	1.301
Instagram	17.5	40.0	–	42.5	2.68	1.207

N = 40. SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree. Decision Weighted Average = 2.08

4.4 Frequency of Social Media Use

Table 8 reveals that most staff use Facebook (Mean = 1.25) and WhatsApp (Mean = 1.25) on a daily basis, indicating that these platforms are essential to their work routines. Instagram (Mean = 2.73) and SlideShare (Mean = 2.69) showed lower usage frequencies, whereas YouTube (Mean = 2.23) and LinkedIn (Mean = 2.43) were used infrequently or monthly. The decision weighted average of 2.22 suggests that library staff use social media rather frequently, with a definite preference for networking and instant messaging services. These findings corroborate Egbukole and Holmner (2022), who verified strong daily use of instant messaging (75.6%) and social networking platforms (83%) among library staff at FUTO. The daily usage patterns are visualised in Figure 4.

Table 8. Frequency level of social media platform usage

Platform	Daily (%)	Weekly (%)	Monthly (%)	Yearly (%)	Never (%)	Mean	SD
Facebook	87.5	–	12.5	–	–	1.25	.670
WhatsApp	90.0	–	7.5	–	2.5	1.25	.809
YouTube	50.0	–	35.0	7.5	7.5	2.23	1.349

Platform	Daily (%)	Weekly (%)	Monthly (%)	Yearly (%)	Never (%)	Mean	SD
Twitter	47.5	–	30.0	7.5	15.0	2.43	1.517
LinkedIn	42.3	–	37.5	12.5	7.5	2.43	1.357
Google Meet	42.5	–	42.5	12.5	2.5	2.33	1.228
Zoom	42.5	–	42.5	12.5	2.5	2.33	1.228
Blogs	30.0	–	57.5	10.0	2.5	2.55	1.108
SlideShare	27.5	–	50.0	15.0	5.0	2.69	1.195
Instagram	35.0	–	40.0	7.5	17.5	2.73	1.467

N = 40. Decision Weighted Average = 2.22

4.5 Challenges to Social Media Use

Table 9 presents the challenges faced by library staff in using social media for information dissemination. The most notable challenges are poor internet facilities (Mean = 3.20), unstable power supply (Mean = 3.20), poor confidence in the use of social media (Mean = 3.15), and lack of awareness (Mean = 3.15). Limited managerial support (Mean = 3.13) and absence of feedback from colleagues (Mean = 3.05) were also identified as serious impediments. These findings align with Uche and Udo Anyanwu (2019), who reported that inadequate internet connectivity and unstable electricity were the primary obstacles to social media use among librarians in Abia and Imo States. The challenges are visualised in Figure 5.

Table 9. Challenges to social media use for information dissemination

Challenge	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD	Decision
No management support	12.5	25.0	–	62.5	3.13	1.181	High
Limited tech skills	7.5	45.0	–	47.5	2.88	1.114	High
Poor internet facilities	4.0	25.0	–	65.0	3.20	1.137	High
Unstable power supply	15.0	22.5	–	65.0	3.20	1.137	High
Weak internet connectivity	15.0	30.0	–	55.0	2.95	1.218	High
No feedback from colleagues	10.0	32.5	–	57.5	3.05	1.154	High
Fear of technology	12.5	40.0	–	47.5	2.83	1.174	High
Inadequate funding	7.5	60.0	–	32.5	2.58	1.035	High
Poor confidence of staff	5.0	35.0	–	60.0	3.15	1.075	High
Lack of awareness	10.0	27.5	–	62.5	3.15	1.145	High
Low social media literacy	12.5	32.5	–	55.0	2.98	1.187	High

N = 40. Criterion Mean = 2.50. Items above 2.50 = High Perception

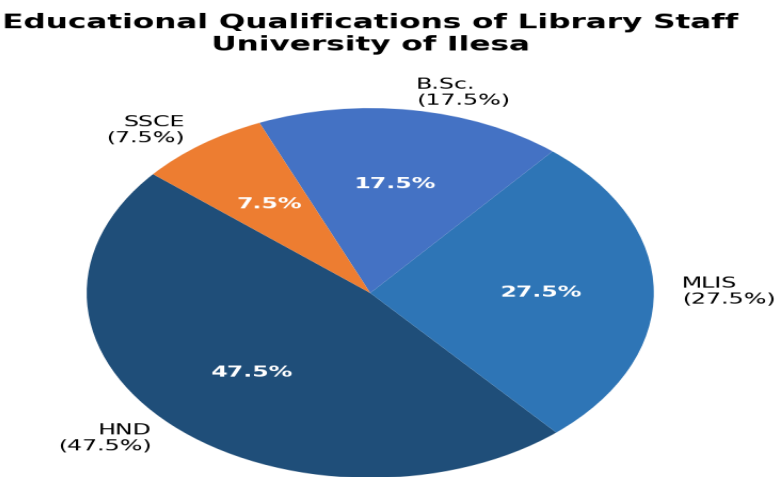


Figure 2: Educational Qualifications of Library Staff at the University of Ilesa

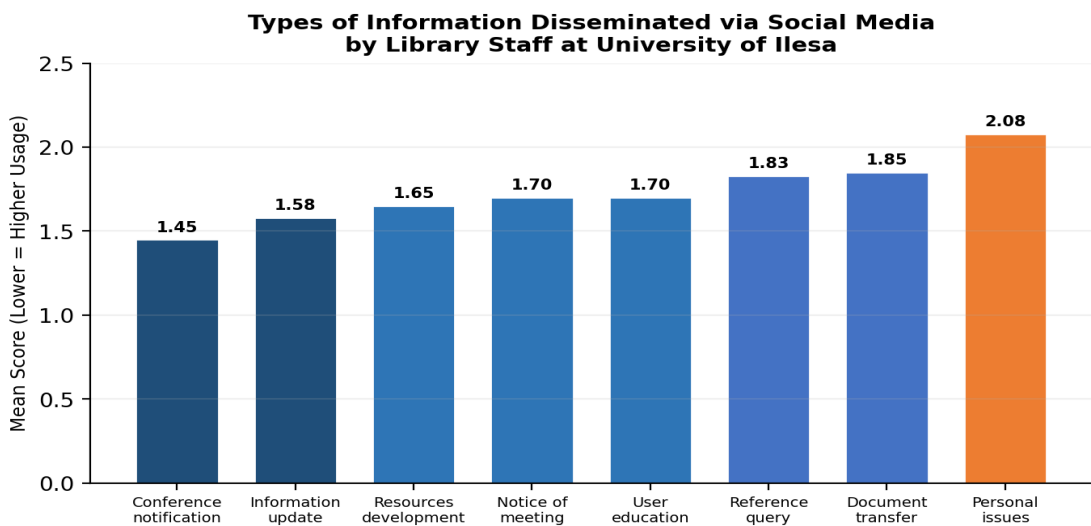


Figure 3: Types of Information Disseminated via Social Media by Library Staff

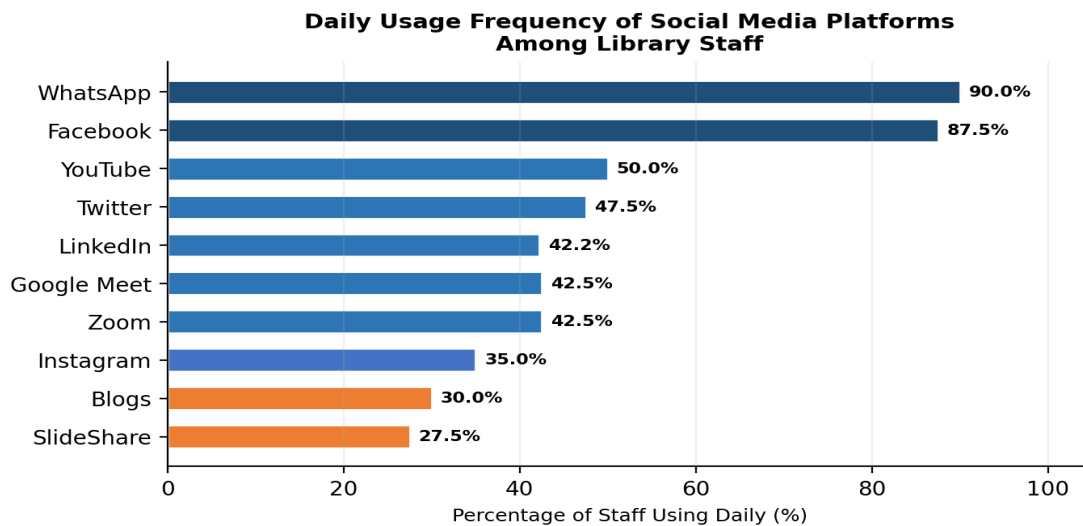


Figure 4: Daily Usage Frequency of Social Media Platforms Among Library Staff

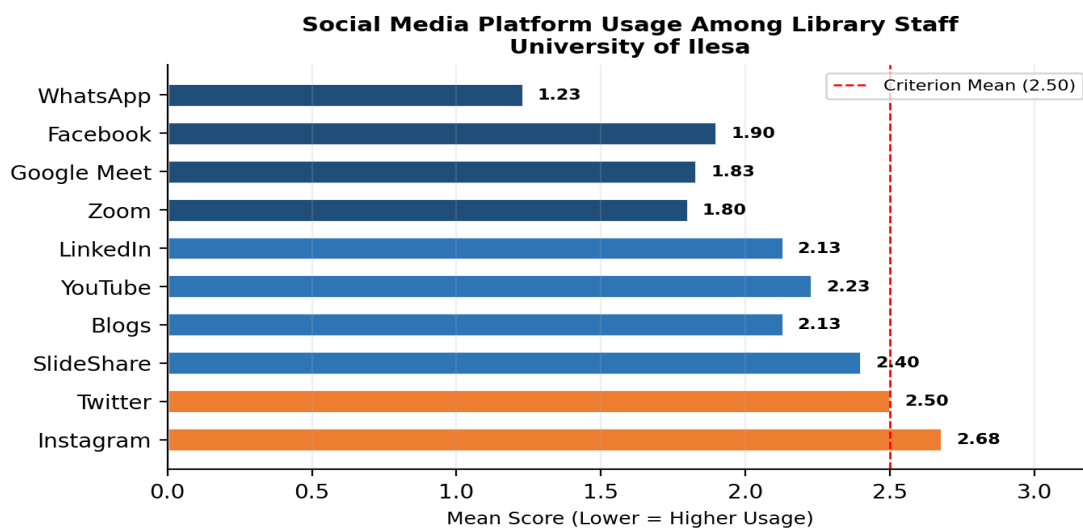


Figure 5: Social Media Platform Usage Among Library Staff at the University of Ilesa

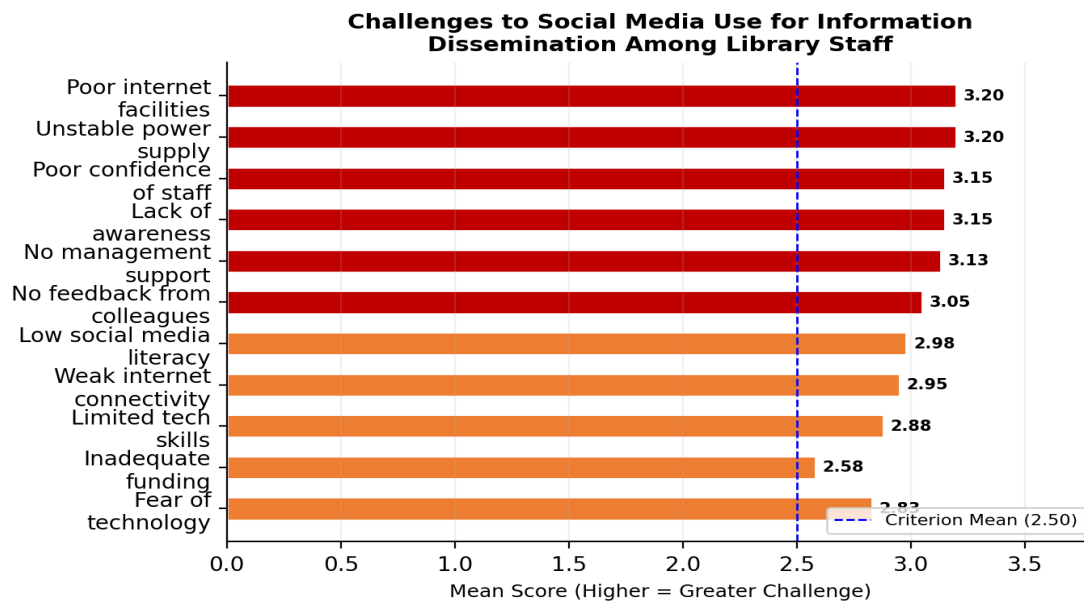


Figure 6: Challenges to Social Media Use for Information Dissemination Among Library Staff

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has examined social media as a tool for information dissemination among academic library staff at the University of Ilesa. The findings demonstrate that social media platforms, particularly WhatsApp and Facebook, are widely adopted and used on a daily basis by library staff for professional communication, conference notifications, information updates, and resource development. The study reveals that the library workforce is predominantly mature and professionally qualified, with a majority holding HND and MLIS qualifications, which positions them well for digital tool adoption. However, the study also identifies notable challenges that constrain the full potential of social media for information dissemination, including poor internet facilities, unstable power supply, limited managerial support, and low confidence among staff.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed. Library management should develop formal social media policies that guide the professional use of social media platforms for information dissemination, addressing concerns about data privacy, institutional accountability, and the distinction between personal and professional communication. The university administration should invest in reliable internet infrastructure and stable power supply to support digital engagement by library staff. Regular training programmes should be organised to build staff confidence and competence in using a wider range of social media platforms, including professionally oriented tools such as LinkedIn, SlideShare, and institutional blogs. Management should actively support and encourage social media adoption by recognising it as a legitimate professional tool rather than a distraction. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to track changes in social media adoption patterns over time and explore the impact of formal social media policies on information dissemination effectiveness in Nigerian academic libraries.

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