Shaping library's social media authority through trust -creating activities: A case of selected academic libraries in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Trust and authority are emerging as key elements of success on social media environment. In spite of a burgeoning field of social media research, the topic on how institutions earn users' trust and establish their social media authority has received very little attention to date. This study describes how academic librarians strategize in creating trust in social media contents and orient their actions towards the goals of achieving social media authority as information experts. The study is guided by the following research question: What are the trust-creating activities that academic librarians do on library's social media to establish social media authority? Data were collected through interviews with 15 librarians from three Nigerian university libraries. Six themes on trust-creating activities emerged from the findings. Three themes are related to trust-creating activities by individual librarians: (a) post credible and useful social media contents; (b) provide relevant and responsive feedback; and (c) have authorized identification or social media icons. Another two themes are associated with trust-creating activities by librarians as a group: (a) collaborate in assessing social contents; (b) be an authority in library and information services. One trust-creating activity taken by the library management emerged i.e. involving the university authority for content. The researchers offer suggestions for librarians to orient their actions towards the goals of achieving social media authority and the distinctions are made in the trust- creating activities between individual, group and organisation. This paper contributes to the under-researched field investigating the actual implementation of social media authority in libraries. The study has shown that social media authority is built on the platter of users' trust. Based on this observation, we believe that successful implementation of social media in the library is associated with not only how proficient librarians are in social media use, but also how they build their social media contents through trust-creating activities.

Keywords: *Social Media; Web 2.0; Social media authority; Users' trust; Academic Libraries*

INTRODUCTION

Libraries have been wrestling with the issue of determining the credibility of Internet-based information since the early 1990s. Many in the library community have reacted to the overwhelming number and variety of information choices available on social media to their clients by adopting an authoritarian view that "the library is where to get good, accurate, and credible information, while the open Internet is filled with bad and wrong

information" (Lankes 2008, p.679). However, Lankes (2008) observed that the issue of determining the credibility of online content is not a crisis of authority, but rather a choice. He further stated that, the market forces on the Web have not come into play to limit users' choices, as it may affect authority. The current stage of information explosion on the Web generated via social media, has cultured academic libraries and librarians to adjust, not to trust completely, information that are found on social media, unless tested, and proved valid and accurate (Bradley 2015). From this, it was found that there is a strong sentiment as advocated by Sullivan (2018) that "librarians have the opportunity, if not duty, to join, if not lead, the fight against misinformation, disinformation and the like" (p.3). Earlier on, Bradley (2015) observed that the development on social media has necessitated academic libraries and librarians, to put forth as a duty to sift outright content and discard information that is inappropriate within the context of social media in library services. Such steps were taken to fulfil the goal of social media as a source of information and support, as well as its marketing activities in the library; and to drive people from the unknown to their unadulterated, perfect and clean social media contents for educational, informational and recreational platforms.

It is interesting to note that libraries use social media at the early stage as a marketing and awareness tool, generally as an "information actor" - pointing to library resources for customers who want to learn more about topics in the current debate, and not as a way to shape information and gain social media trust as an "information provider". But then, given the role that social media has played recently in the spread of mis- and dis-information (Allcott and Getzkow 2017; Conroy, Rubin, and Chen 2015), academic libraries and librarians have come to term in order to reconsolidate, reshape and repackage their information sources and re-strategize their services as a means of retaining users' trust to gain social authority in the academic environment, According to Kalyanaraman and Sundar (2006), the Web that personalize informational content, tend to generate more positive user attitudes. Bradley (2015) argued that content can simply be judged and validated on the basis of the reputation of the publisher, editors or the compilers of the information in the academic libraries. He further maintained that the authoritativeness of information depends largely upon the method of compilation, scope, treatment, arrangement and items of the information, as well as the format such as the clarity, uniqueness and the reliability of the information. Bradley (2015) acknowledged that the Internet has created a different set of problems in terms of accuracy and validation of social media content in the academic libraries. Maxwell (2016) maintained that, the moment a Facebook page is set up, the next step is to identify the audience who have the ideas on the contents, so that one can establish an authentic online profile and authority.

Social media and online social networking takes place in a context of trust i.e. trust becomes an essential and important element of a successful social network (Grabner-Kräute and Bitter 2015). In order to balance the open nature of social networks, it is important for any organisations to build trust communities i.e. communities that create an environment where members can share their thoughts, opinions, and experiences in an open and honest way, built on authenticity, open sharing, like-mindedness and mutual respect (Sherchan, Nepal and Paris 2013). We contend engaging in trust-creating activities provides an ideal foundation for libraries to build trust communities and establish social media authority. Thus, today, libraries can only be successful in social media activities, if the content illustrates what is relevant to the users. Bearing in mind that, the applications of social media platforms in the library, are not for profit making, but to establish online presence, reach more people, gain customers' trust, earn service reputation and maintain social authority (Bradley 2015; Vlieghe, Muls, and Rutten 2016) – thus, the reason that

Pitts (2016) described as having "social media authority". Lankes (2008) viewed authority as a trusted source used in place of a given individual's credibility decisions. The process of becoming or choosing an authority is "through developing trust, and, arguably, seeking coherence and consistency in the authority" (Lankes 2008 p. 678). The lack of an 'authority' input gives an easy way for disinformation and rumors to spread on social media. Tampere, Tampere and Luoma-Aho (2016) emphasized that, for authority to be active on social media, information should be readily made available so that it would not leak through unofficial channels and spread on social networks.

Therefore, the current research attempts to understand how academic libraries and librarians in Nigerian universities orient their actions towards the goals of achieving social media authority. The research is based on the philosophy of social media as a platform that facilitates "social sharing, knowledge sharing, ideation and open innovation, and in the use of social networks for customer engagement in innovation" (Følstad and Brandtzaeg 2016, p.1) where "participatory web in which social media content's creation is dynamic" (Maness 2006), and there is a change in interaction between users and libraries in a new culture of participation (Holmberg et al. 2009). Contents and social sharing determine the success and the credibility of social media platforms, in which in turn informs social media authority. For this reason, this explorative research focuses on the library's effort in establishing social media authority through activities that earn users' trust of its credible and reliable social media content.

LITERATURE REVIEW: THE NEED FOR SOCIAL MEDIA TRUST AND AUTHORITY

To date, very little literature offers substantial insight or guidance on handling users trust related to libraries and social media. A substantial amount of scholarly literature in a recent review emphasizes the benefits of social media in academic libraries in the developing world under five major themes, namely: marketing and promotion of library services; professional/self-development; social interaction; media sharing; and communication (Magoi, Aspura and Abrizah 2019). Notwithstanding the numerous publications concerning social media research, literature reveals that social media in the library context in the developing world is still in its infancy, especially in the area of establishing social media authority and trust/authority creating activities. The irony is that, the use of social media applications in the academic environment worldwide has prompted academic libraries in the developing countries such as Nigeria with new challenges in terms of accessibility and services to earn users' trust and authority. Such challenges are: the control of information resources in physical and virtual domains; meeting the rapid changing information needs and expectations of the 21st century users; making themselves more relevant in the trend of the digital age; attracting users to the library; and maintaining trust and reputation in terms of social media contents in order to retain customers in the library (Akporhonor and Olise 2015; Iwhiwhu, Ruteyan, and Eghwubare 2010). Invariably, librarians' responsibilities are known among others, to be the organisers, interpreters and providers of information. However, in the social media context of Library 2.0 applications, the services of the librarians become more interactive and collaborative through the use of multi-media web-based applications for library services which in turn, adds more value and burden in terms of accessibility and services in earning users' trust and gaining authority of contents in the social media units. Hence, librarians have to consider it a duty to create a strategy to sift out accurate content and discard information that is inappropriate or wrong within the context of social media in the academic libraries (Bradley 2015).

In the context of this study, social media authority means compelling acceptance and belief on social media content based on users' trust and reputation of the platforms. In other words, social media authority refers to the influence of social media contents and platforms on the users. Bradley (2015) discussed authority checking on social media, describing authority in the library context as having library users looking up to the librarian as an expert in both the content and services. In this present digital age, society cannot control the flow of news or even messages anymore (Allcott, and Gentzkow 2017; Luoma-aho and Vos 2010). It has resulted in individuals, organisations and corporate bodies having to compete against other sources for them to be heard and trusted. Veil, Buehner, and Palenchar (2011) asserted that the news of a crisis today can be shared and re-shared, reaching millions of people without the intervening presence of a journalist. This has led to information on social media going viral uncontrollably.

As the contents produced and published by libraries have become increasingly digital, libraries have begun integrating techniques that leverage the powerful network capabilities offered by social media. Librarians make use of the social media to connect with their users easily (O'Dell 2010), disseminating important information sources to users (Milstein 2009), and promoting library services and events (Charnigo and Barnett-Ellis 2007). Literature indicates that in some institutions, Facebook has been used to facilitate professional relationships within and beyond the libraries (Graham, Faix and Hartman 2009). In the same vein, social media provides the platform for academic libraries to establish authority within their community (Bradley 2015). Despite the increasing use of social media by academic librarians, they are still cautious to play a central and facilitating role in its implementation, since not much is known on how they create users' trust and establish authority on social media.

Trust in social media is synonymous with credibility and reliability, and is associated with sharing accurate and timely information, insights, engaging with followers regularly, and being active within similar communities to build outreach and reputation (Bryson 2017). According to Pickard, Gannon-Leary and Coventry (2010), instituting trust is a process complicated by internal and external factors. Rieh and Danielson (2007) and Tampere, Tampere and Luoma-Aho (2016) noted that the scholarly community have to use multiple information sources which may require new skills with greater level of uncertainty to judge the trustworthiness of content. In the library and information service context, it was found that academic libraries had to develop strategies for making the best use of social media platforms in an effort to gain users' trust and authority (Boateng and Liu 2014). Media sharing sites are used by academic libraries to engage users through the provision of library instructions and tutorials as well as sharing wide variety of topics (Wordofa 2014). These activities are attractive and are potential for building trust and authority on social media pages in academic libraries.

The situation now is that many social media users are facing difficulties to gauge the authenticity of social media content, unlike during the print era, when it was simple to trace the origin and accuracy of a piece of information. Bradley (2015) demonstrated that an individual could locate an information about an organisation through his favourites search engine by just typing the name of the establishment and click the website. But today, even if that happens, one must think of exactly what he wants to do with what sort of information. This development in the social media arena makes it hard for every content on digital platform to be trusted. Reich, Bentman, and Jackman (2008) noted that, in order to avoid conflict and crisis, it is critical to know how people process information they

receive and the organisation that disseminates it. This helps to standardize the logic and the platform to which such information is meant for accordingly.

Contents and social sharing determine the success of any social media platform. Maxwell (2016) believes that, to compel customers to accept and believe the social media contents, the academic librarians must take a level of responsibility in establishing facts and validity of the information. Maxwell (2016) maintains that, the moment a Facebook page is set up, the next step is to identify the content creator, so that to establish authentic and authoritative online profiles. He advised that one useful way to build trusted and reputable social media presence is by encouraging users and supporters to "like your new page" because they are the people that are likely to see your posts through their newsfeed. If the users understand the firm authority of the social media platforms, they will always move to be attracted to its website. Bradley (2015) narrated that, in the past, authoritativeness of information (content) depends largely upon the method of compilation, scope, treatment, arrangement and items of the information. He provided examples such as the full name of the author, birth, academic and professional qualifications, position held and publication contributions; indexes and cross references; updating and revisions, clarity, uniqueness and the reliability of the information (Bradley 2015). However, in the present time, the Internet has created a different set of problems in terms of accuracy and validation of social media content in the academic libraries. Kalyanaraman and Sundar (2006) confirmed that web portals that personalize content, tend to generate more positive user attitudes.

Customers become successful in social media engagement in terms of building relationship with other users through social interactions, sharing of ideas and keeping long term conversation especially if the social media content illustrates what is relevant to users (Gummerus et al. 2012). Yi (2014) proposed that, for easy maximization of engagement with the library users, librarians can use Instant Messaging and Twitter for reference services, while Facebook for advertisement and Blogs can be used updated with latest news from the library. All these are strategies aimed at creating users' trust and gaining authority. Further, Zohoorian-Fooladi and Abrizah (2014), described how academic libraries engage with users at different levels to fulfil their users' needs which aim at building trust, and social media authority in a form of a honeycomb framework of seven social media building blocks: presence, synchronicity, information needs, groups, conversation, relationship and current awareness. Evidently, librarians make use of social media platforms based on this framework to establish mutual communication, facilitate interaction and establish users' trust, and authority despite challenges. Siddike and Kiran (2015) pointed out that, academic libraries uses Electronic-Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) to raise awareness and build relationship with the users' communities through social networking sites. Harinarayana and Raju (2010) acknowledged that some university libraries have been using social networking sites to make available photos of library events aims at fostering collaboration and participation which are the most attractive features of Web 2.0. In another study, Harrison et al. (2017) found that library's social media postings create a sense of outreach and advocacy with the goal of establishing community connection, providing an inviting environment, and access to content as needed or desired.

Accordingly, if an individual or an organisation do not gain users' trust and authority on social media, such body may be likely performing less and less social media marketing (Armstrong 2015). Academic libraries are recognized to have social authority by regularly participating in online conversations and contributing valuable information in an honest and genuine approach. Research has shown that the best way to reach and attract regular users of social media is through the constant updates of the social media status (Connell

2009). Kim and Sin (2016) in their research found out that students in the academic environments uses social media for getting updates and also to have background information around the academic community. In terms of authority, Ayu and Abrizah (2011) maintained that libraries that posted content daily are likely to have more "followers" and "likes" compared to those that updated the status only once a month.

Social media platforms offered some interactive tools for two-way communication, which facilitate in gathering users' feedback (Abdullah et al. 2015; Agyekum, Arthur and Trivedi 2016). In identifying the important of updates and feedback which equally form part of reputation and authority, Boateng and Liu (2014) revealed that 97 percent of the top US academic libraries were using RSS to communicate university news, events, and resource updates, while Chat/Instant Messaging was used to provide real-time connections with users. They further noted that the libraries use various platforms to mediate the delivery of IM-based services. Dickson and Holley (2010) commented that librarians can post news about the library and events happening in the library and expect feedback from users. Similarly, Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) admitted that librarians periodically post messages, share information on a particular subject or issues both in the institutions and government and allow users to comment or contribute to the content. Akporhonor and Olise (2015) contended that social media has become a dependable platform for dissemination of information, a forum for feedback mechanism, research and as well for promotion. They further acknowledged that social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube and Wiki are useful for the promotion of library resources and services and for the speedy collection of feedback from library patrons. Such dynamic activities of social media are projecting effective services and also maintaining relationships with users through updates and users' feedback which invariably attracts trust and authority to the academic libraries. Such activities encourage patrons and new fans to join the library. Hence, it is not out of place to note that social media is a catalyst in re-engineering two-way communication for both the libraries and the librarians regarding creating users' trust in order to earn social media authority.

OBJECTIVE AND METHOD

The objective of this study is to investigate how academic librarians in Nigerian university libraries orient their actions towards the goals of achieving authority as information experts on social media with the intention to retain their customers. The study is guided by the following research question: *"What are the trust-creating activities that academic librarians do on library's social media to establish social media authority".*

The study purposively sampled three federal universities in the northern part of Nigeria for the following reasons: (a) these universities are among the top universities in Nigeria in terms of academic and research; (b) the libraries are accredited and have established social media units; and (c) the libraries have social media presence. Five librarians from each of the university library (coded A, B, and C) were chosen based on the following criteria:
   (a) Participants have been in the services of the university libraries at different levels and stages;
   (b) Participants have at least five (5) years of library working experience;
   (c) Participants reported having served in various sections at different capacity including social media units of the libraries;
   (d) Participants are active users of at least one social media platform; and
   (e) Participants expressed willingness and gave consent to participate.

Fifteen (15) librarians were then recruited as study participants, as 15 is the smallest acceptable sample for all qualitative research (Bertaux 1981) and saturation could be considered reached within the first twelve interviews (Guest, Bunce and Johnson 2016). Based on the sampling criteria, the participants were classified into three different categories: (a) chief librarian, (b) heads of the social media units; and (c) academic librarians with different designations. Table 1 shows the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1: Participants' Profile

Participants	Position held	Academic Qualification	Age	Social Media Presence
University Library A				
A1	Chief Librarian	PhD	57	Facebook, Twitter, Blogs
A2	System Librarian	MLIS	39	Facebook
A3	Assistant Librarian	BLIS	27	Facebook
A4	Librarian II	BLIS	36	Facebook
A5	Head of Social Media	MLIS	40	Facebook, Twitter
University Library B				
B1	Chief Librarian	PhD	49	Facebook,
B2	Law Librarian	BLIS	37	Facebook, Twitter
B3	System Librarian	BLIS	31	Facebook
B4	Librarian II	BLIS	34	Facebook
B5	Head of Social Media	MLIS	42	Facebook, Twitter
University Library C				
C1	Chief Librarian	PhD	56	Facebook, Twitter
C2	Institute of Agriculture Librarian	BLIS	39	Facebook
C3	System Librarian	BLIS	31	Facebook
C4	Librarian I	MLIS	47	Facebook
C5	Head of Social Media	MLIS	51	Facebook, Twitter

Data collection was conducted between March and November, 2016. A semi-structured interview protocol was used for data collection, which allows researchers the right to ask participants the same expected set of questions. Semi-structured interview guide provides a clear set of instructions for the researchers and is more reliable and comparable in qualitative data (Fylan 2005). To probe further, participants were encouraged to talk about their experiences through open-ended questions (Dearnley 2005). In order to understand further on how academic librarians strategize in creating social media contents, the researchers observe the social media platforms of the university libraries and findings were triangulated with the in-depth interviewing of the participants.

The interviews were conducted in the participants' workplace (library offices) for the purpose of comfort and privacy. Each interview lasted between 40 – 45 minutes. The conversations were audiotaped. A code of numbers was used to identified interview recordings and transcriptions to create room for confidentiality at the point of analysis. Codes (A1 to A5; B1 to B5; C1 to C5) were used to protect the identity of the participants in the data analysis (Kite 1999). The decision to use participant codes was made earlier in the research and it was based primarily on the philosophical principle of participation and collaboration between the researchers and the participants.

For the purpose of accuracy and detail capturing and reporting of data, data analysis commenced right after the completion of the first interview transcript. The data collection and data analysis were carried out manually on concurrent basis. Each interview transcript was written manually which enable the first researcher the opportunity to read every detail information transcribed, in order to critically analyze and assign codes on the transcripts data as suggested by Merriam (2009). Here, the data goes through several rounds of data refinement and filtration process, employing Miles and Huberman's (1994) "three steps data analysis: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification" approach all through the process. At this point, potential codes are listed and tabulated consistent with the research objectives and research questions.

RESULTS

The study found that the three selected libraries have been using two social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter, for academic and social interactions as well as collaborations. The sampled librarians understood the need for libraries to be present wherever their users are (Maness 2006) and they seemed to be positive about the idea of using social media in a way that can benefit the library. They acknowledged that trustworthiness of social media content attracts followers to patronize their social media pages. They believed that when social media is properly used with honest contents, it has the potential of reaching unlimited number of users who come to the platform and the library could earn its social media authority. The participants revealed their trust-creating activities through content creation in order to establish social media authority. Six themes related to trust-creating activities emerged in the interviews.

(a) Posting Credible and Useful Social Media Content

Based on the observation of the social media platform used, the librarians seemed to understand the value of social media content and how it can influence the use of social media. Participants at their personal levels, emphasized on building trustworthy contents on their social media platforms. The views of the participants are all about knowing exactly what to post and providing precise and clear contents that they believed has to do with the librarians' personal attitudes and the way they think. A participant stated that, "*Trust ensues when the Facebook messages of a librarian are straight to the point to satisfy the curiosity of his followers*" (A4). Her belief is that, a librarian would earn users' trust and in the long run gain authority when the social media contents are credible enough and satisfy the type of enquiries the users want. Similarly, B3 stated: "*Customers' trust in social media context is all about 'you' as a person and what you are doing, social media is all about 'you'. For you to be taken seriously, you need to know yourself and what you want people to take you to be*". B3 emphasized further on the librarian's decision to ensure the credibility of social media content he posted or shared. "*The need to be sure of information before communicating is building trust from your customers. If your users establish fact about you and notice that your information are genuine, you don't need to tell them, by your reputations on the platforms they trust and follow you.*" Furthermore, B2 echoed "*On personal basis, librarian need to know his users and making effort to know their needs, to create and source out credible and useful content to serve them better*". B2 felt that it is a privilege for librarian without consultation, to check his/her social media homepage from time-to-time. C4 cautioned librarians to "*be on the alert in case someone may fault your social media page with wrong messages. Be very principle in dealing with issues that may arise on your Facebook pages*". The personal consciousness of librarians is that, the quality

of the content they share and produce, as well as the advice they share when joining conversations, create users' trust and shapes their social media authority.

(b) Providing Relevant and Responsive Feedback

All participants have the opinion that, responsive feedback and the relevance of information *"when users need it the most from us"* (A5) count much on social media in creating users' trust. A5 thought much about timely responses to users and acquaintances on the library Facebook page. *"The response to the users matter a lot, they expect to receive a response, on the exact same day"*. The following verbatim responses illustrate participants' thoughts in creating users' trust rest on the promptness of the social media content to gain authority:

"…experience has shown that even if the contents do not meet the learning need of the customers, but if your responses are not timely, they would be easily turn off and never patronize your Facebook again." (A2);

"… the genuineness of the fast reply is observed. Just think, how related the information to my query? If the answer satisfies my query, then a trust is built, and the relationship goes stronger." (C4).

Similar ideas on responsive feedback were expressed by other participants. Their opinions were deepening on the effectiveness and timely responses of messages apart from the content. Their thinking seemed to be all about the relevant and satisfactory answers to the users at a given time. *"I bear in mind that the use of social media is just in time. All activities on social media rest on how quickly you respond to your customers and not just the information alone"* (B5). *"Most important to me, I consider the time of response to my users and it is common for us to regularly check our Facebook"* (A2). The responses show that relevant social media content and timely feedback are important in building users' trust to gain social media authority. Observation of the social media platforms used by the university libraries indicates that the library Facebook is a platform for customer service function that responds to users' questions and queries; users are more likely to trust those librarians who are helpful in providing immediate and friendly response.

(c) Having Authorized Identification or Social Media Icons

A few participants thought that a social media post from a respected name in their library would act as a vote of confidence in the quality of the content, and is a quick and reliable way to gain the audience's trust. Participants expressed establishing the trustworthiness of the social media content through simple identification of the "authority" on the social media postings. However, such identification should only be known to the library community. According to the participants, the identification is more of protection and a key to ascertain the reliability of the content to *"get the library users to trust them"* (B2). B2 explained that some of the ways he does is to assign a name or label, such as his initial or the symbol of the social media unit, which is a mark that he can understand. He further reaffirmed that, *"trust has to do with identification of personality when it comes to the issue of social media platforms"* (B2). C2 reinforced the personal decision of B2 that such action is to confirm whenever the users are in doubt about any content in the digital resources that the librarians share. C2 remarked *"get an authority to contribute to your content"* and emphasized that authorized identification indicates that *"the message is not just coming from anywhere"*, and should there be any doubt, the users can confirm directly from the source at any given time.

Participants in general believed that as a long-term strategy, one of the best ways of securing social media shares is to build relationships with social media icons, i.e. the

influential library key personnel who are active on social media. The distinguishing aspect centered on the individual librarian and he/she wears the crown or bears the risk whatsoever contents is in the social media postings and shares. The more experienced academic librarians acknowledged that, the decision taken at this individual level is faster and easier than collective decision that has to involve the entire units. However, the individual librarian at this stage may be influenced by anything around him/her and with no proper judgement. One basic and distinctive aspect here is that he/she is the unit of his decision-making in every social media content.

(d) Collaborating in Assessing Social Contents

As discovered earlier, the participants believed that users are likely to trust content coming from authorities or experts on a particular topic. In order to maintain their authority as information experts, librarians need to keep up with the latest research and news in the library and information industry, and frequently share their insights. Three librarians (A5, B5, C5) believe that they can always share or tweet information, but that does not mean that the contents are trustworthy. They felt it is imperative to collectively check social media contents for validation before posting or sharing them on the social media pages. Such act, according to the participants, is to ensure the appropriateness of social media postings as well as the practice of monitoring the content of replies to posts. They believed that the presence of such collective assessments for user-driven social media sites with content contributed by many people can change the way people perceive and utilize information from social media, which invariably create users' trust and build library's social media authority.

Participants acknowledged that academic librarians collaboratively create social media contents where they get involved in collective assessment of social media contents which may bind on the Systems Department or the entire social media unit. *"Before anything else, we have to jointly check our previous postings to dictate those feedbacks such as likes, comments or shares and most importantly observe whether the FB post is actively utilized or not"* (A2). B3 stated that *"Our systems department and social media unit collectively employ various means by repeating relevant Facebook postings and jointly, as a team to evaluate the quality and the sources of information to achieve our end results as information disseminators".* Besides, the participants described how librarians sometimes, collectively as a team, go further to undertake an online feedback of their social media followers. According to the participants, going by such action, they identified the individuals who share the library contents on the latter's platforms. More importantly, the simple fact that an authorized unit, has collaboratively taken time out of their day to contribute to social media contents and shares succeed in creating perceived authority with the library audience.

Participants B2, C2 and A2, supported this with examples on how academic librarians work in partnership with other libraries to earn users' trust and shape their social media authority:
"Our library shares contents of other library's social media, but before doing on our Facebook and Twitter, we observed the responses from users" (B2).
"In our meetings, we make decision and collectively established facts after validating the social media contents with other libraries; our definite goal is to influence and drive followers to our FB pages so that we gain their trust" (A2).
"We have gained more likes and shares; I believe because our library share links with other libraries that we know are credible and frequent in their updating of content" (C2).

Similarly, C2 further emphasized on the collective assessment of content before it is made known to the public: *"we did this collectively as a group, and maintained posting relevant content to ensure that we are doing the right thing at the right time so that we maintain our users and they will be more engaging with our content"* (C2).

The librarians believed that social media can be powerful marketing tool and offer a way for libraries to promote their resources and services while allowing a two-way dialogue with their users. The participants understood the importance of allowing their users to connect with them as knowledge curators and trust to be built between the two parties. Librarians in this study asserted that, involving more librarians in promoting the library resources and services through reliable social media platforms is an essential requisite to earn users' trust as well as creating visibility of the library. B2 stated that it becomes the duty of the librarians to collectively market the library activities through social media to maintain library's visibility - *"From our own experience in making full use of our Facebook, we have to involve more librarians to publicize the library services"*. He further commented that *"the role of academic librarians become crucial to ensure library visibility so that to earn social media authority"* (B2).

However, some participants acknowledged that not every library activity, resources and services need to be publicized on social media. On looking to increase the library visibility, librarians only need to concentrate on the core activities that are exciting, informative, relevant and current in the academic environments and one of the best ways is to leverage on librarians' connections. *"Each time you share a post, ask your library colleague to do the same"* (C1). This is in line with Bradley (2015) who noted that collective discussion on social media content of library sources and services among professional librarians helps determine the social media authority in promotion of library services.

(e) Being an Authority in Library and Information Services

Library services is another theme that emerged from the librarians' verbatim statements. Library services represents the collective effort and ideas of librarians in applying their experiences to offer various services in order to earn users' trust for the social media content. The librarians applied their experiences collectively on social media to provide library services because they realized that social media has changed the way people operates in the academic environment. Participants expressed that, their librarianship service experiences and expertise over the years assisted them in collective decision-making process to create social media content than can earn users' trust. Thus, they can be a leading authority in Library and Information services. Such innovation through collective effort have invariably earned users' trust for the social media content. A4 remarked "*Most of the things we posted on library's Facebook and Twitter were based on the decisions from our experiences, perspectives with opinions to share as information providers. We all aim to address our users' information needs and make them want to come back to us for more."* A1, with the most professional experience and academic qualification remarked *"personalizing our content with anecdotes from the librarians' experiences helps our audience relate to what is said, and in turn, helps them to trust us. We know better than you, so believe what we say"*. This was supported by B2 and B4, that such decision-making process were achieved through collective experiences of professional practices over the years. However, participants lamented that collective innovation-decision process is time consuming. They felt that, simple matters that could have been handled by an individual have to pass through many stages before the contents are finally posted on the social media pages which often alter expectation of the social media librarian in winning users' trust through responsive feedback. Thus, to say, the participation of every librarian in

deciding content and the need to involve an authority on a particular subject often delay action and make information obsolete in the cause of delivery.

(f) Involving the University Authority for Content

The participants affirmed that in the course of establishing the library social media authority, they had to connect with the parent organisation and the major funding body of the library, i.e. the library and university top management. They added that, such strategy helps to maintain communication and leverage the social media platforms to the libraries' advantages. C5 maintained that: *"Interaction with the university management is necessary in order to maintain sanity and earn support from users of our* [social media] *platforms".* He acknowledged that the university management emphasizes and encourages various social media units of the university to keep up with the latest research and news in academia, to be disseminated to staff and students of the universities.

Participants (C4, B1 and A4), acknowledged the involvement of the university and library management in the provision and instruction of library social media contents:
"I received directive from the library management to share information that have direct connection with the university goals. And we also post information about academic programmes and activities within the university" (C4).
"They want us to put contents that need to be addressed and share with the public, like due date for registrations, penalties for defaulters, feedback, the university calendar, release of admission, any news and events about the university" (B1).
*"We mostly comply with the university's directives and always make sure that all information we create and share conform to the university and the library management's decision. For example, we share a blog that wrote about the management appreciation to our staff and students for generously donating towards the rebuilding of the library after a fire incident. This kind of feedback is purely management's decision" (*A4).

Observation of the social media platforms of the university libraries shows that the use of the social media platforms is not strictly confined to library business when the trust-creating activities involve the university authority for content. There is a direct involvement of the university management in this aspect of information dissemination on the social media pages, at least by a few individuals in positions of influence or power. Participants lamented that contents coming from the university authority often influence and enforce the social media unit to be accountable to monitor and moderate comments and they need a librarian specifically earmarked for this activity. As a result, the social media librarians have to formulate a careful response if necessary, in setting a tone that reflect the missions and values of the university and initiate discussions on the university matters.

DISCUSSION

The research centered on academic librarians' trust-creating activities on social media in their quest to establish social media authority. Findings indicate that librarians have been in the vanguard of establishing credible content on their social media platforms. Academic libraries, like any other information service organisations, create social media presence to build trust and foster a degree of authority to their content, targeting only the audience that make the most sense of the relevant, interesting content on a regular basis. The interviews identified six themes related to trust-creating activities. Three themes identified as trust-creating activities done by individual librarians are: (a) posting credible and useful

social media contents (b) providing relevant and responsive feedback; and (c) having authorized identification or social media icons. Another two themes are associated to trust-creating activities done by librarians as a group: (a) collaborating in assessing social content and shares; and (b) being an authority in library and information services. One authoritative trust-creating activity handled by the library management emerged i.e. involving the university authority for content. The study found librarians to have used various means of shaping social media content through trust-creating activities at different levels of decision-makings. Therefore, in a broad sense, the findings revealed three decision-making authority in shaping the library's social media trust-creating activities, which echo Cotter and Saso's (2016) study on the required approval for posting on social media. They are (a) delegated authority i.e. decision-making by individual librarians; (b) collaborative authority i.e. decision-making by group of librarians; and (c) administrative authority i.e. decision-making by the library management. Cotter and Saso (2016) found that in making decisions about what to post on social media, academic libraries rely on informal guidelines, train individual librarians designated to a post, work in teams and committees, follow institutional policies, and seek input or approval on a case by case basis.

Participants in this study maintained that, creating users' trust in the social media context has to do with librarians' personal decision-making process in creating quality content that their audience would love to read and share on other social media platforms. In doing so, librarians felt that the frequency of updates and responsive feedback are important conditions in presenting a strong online presence and social media authority, however a key challenge for librarians is responding in a timely as users expect quick answers (Sieck 2015). Yet, it is rather the quality and type of content posted, and an alignment of the information needs and expectations of the library users that leads to successful engagement towards (McCallum 2015), consequently put them having a trust towards library as an important information services provider (Shafawi and Hassan 2018).

Librarians as a group also keep close interaction through posting variety of messages and sharing of social media links with other libraries for the purpose of gaining users' trust. This research found that librarians collectively interact among themselves, on decision-making process, for the type of social media contents to help create and build strongly-connected library user community and create the library social media authority. This concise with Chu and Du (2013) and Mahmood and Richardson (2011) that the frontier strategy of social media involves interacting, information sharing, building and cultivating a community of interest within the social media web pages. Such activities aim at maintaining consisting standard of content and authority on the social media pages of the academic libraries. Academic librarians command authority in the social media units as many users engaged on the social media platforms of their libraries (Bradley 2015). Participants stated that proper evaluation of quality content and the sources of information, as well as studying the users' needs are collectively embraced and put into practice by social media librarians with the aim of creating social media authority. Although coordinating library staff efforts was found to be another main challenge social media presents in the library (Sieck 2015), all departments in the library should cooperate and collaborate with one another to ensure that social media implementation is worth for the enhancement of library services.

Further, the study found that another trust-creating activity is that librarians work hand-in-glove with the university management to establish library social media authority. The social media units ensure their readiness in complying with the management directives in every piece of content posted on the social media pages. Although the literature reported that libraries have the freedom to connect regularly with users without imposed

restrictions from central university communication, tension between the university and the library administration, to some extent, is a challenge social media poses in the library (Sieck 2015). Librarians in this study accept to compromise with the directives of university management, which they believe, is meant to safeguard and sustain the social media units in terms of implementation and also to earn the confidence of the managements' support of the social media contents. This is because the management is the funding body of the social media units in the libraries. Identifying the importance of the university management's involvement in the activities of the social media units, shows that when the voice of the library authority becomes weak or even misses, various distorted information will spread widely (Eppler and Mengis 2004; Sweeney 2001).

People in general believe and trust the information professionals (Bradley 2015); many want the library to become a preferred provider of information, and that librarians already have a reputation as authoritative (Lankes 2008). Irrespective of these views, librarians in this study have been wrestling with the issues reported in the literature, such as poor management support for the use of social media in marketing the academic libraries (AlAwadhi and Al-Daihani 2019); quality of content they could create (Cavanagh 2016); and considerable amount of staff time for effective social media engagement (Li and Li 2013). Participants also linked the problems to managements' involvement in the decision-making authority of social media contents. Notwithstanding the deterrent on librarians to create users' trust, librarians need to strategize, regardless of the types of social media outlets used in the academic libraries. Librarians should not shy away from been contents conscious in their decision-making process in the social media units. With cooperation and teamwork creating better content (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010), library staff should be encouraged to work together for social media. In addition, social media librarians need to maintain constant checking of the social media homepages, with the assurance of its relevancy and trustworthiness to the intended audience. As such, Bradley (2015) advised that, librarians can leverage that trust by becoming beacons, pointing to good-quality information, irrespective of its origins. He further affirmed that, a posting on social media can be as authoritative as a web resource, depending on who posted what. Ideally, information that is wealthy and well-delivered from an authoritative person or organisation attracts traffic and should influence social media users' feedback. Feedback is considered crucial in social media communication as it provides answers to users' need which invariably build trust and on processes through which trust actually emerges.

The core of the work of librarians is the sharing information so this would suggest librarians are in a unique position to implement and exploit social media to their advantage. Since the use of social media in academic libraries has become mainstream, Zohoorian-Fooladi and Abrizah (2014) advised that librarians should understand how best to harness this technology to their users' advantage too. Having a social media that is geared towards creating users' trust and establishing social media authority means that the library must stock up on sources and services to produce content that are satisfactorily aligned with the needs and expectations of the users. Creating social media authority can be challenge; it takes time and effort to generate relevant and interesting content but finding and maintaining the library voice can really help. This can be achieved through improved depth and quality of the interaction and student engagement, as well as working teeth-and-tight with their professional colleagues and parents' organisations in creating social media content. This calls for teamwork, whereby Library and Information Science practitioners are to proffer decision on how to interact professionally to reduce criticism on their social media contents for the purpose of gaining social media authority. The fact is that, once trust is absent in social media content, there is the tendency of reinforcing distrust by

users of the platforms, which can also affect social media authority in the academic libraries (Zhao et al. 2012). Librarians need to ensure their audience understands what they are trying to achieve with social media. This comes with a new level of accountability that formed part of the challenges of academic librarians in the social media environment.

In Nigeria, within the past half-decade or so, there has been a dramatic adoption and application of ICTs in libraries, particularly in university and research libraries; and this has led tremendously to the globalization of the library services in the country (Ani, Atseys and Esin, 2005). In line with the development of ICT application, the academic libraries in Nigeria have started the adoption of social media platforms like LinkedIn, MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter in keeping update with their employees' records and communications. The findings show that academic libraries and librarians in Nigeria are aware of social media and most of them are already motivated to adopt the use of the platforms for both their official and personal purposes in handling library services. In addition, the study has shown that social media authority in Nigeria is built on the platter of users' trust. Based on this observation, the successful implementation of social media in the selected academic libraries is associated with not only how proficient librarians are in social media use, but also how they build their social media contents through trust-creating activities.

CONCLUSION

This paper presents the findings from a study of how academic librarians orient their actions towards the goals of achieving social media authority as information experts in the academic environment. In doing so, it highlights the authority of librarians in the art of decision-making process as experts in information acquisition and dissemination and services offered in the libraries through social media. The study found that the libraries and the librarians cement their reputation as an authority through various ways of creating credible social media content and verifying credible sources of information before sharing them. The study also shows how recency of updates, the presence of an authorized identification and collaborative assessment of contents and social shares can earn users' trust and shape social media authority.

This paper contributes to the under-researched field investigating the actual implementation of social media authority in libraries. The study has confirmed that social media authority is built on the platter of users' trust. Based on this observation, we believe that successful implementation of social media in the library is associated with not only how proficient librarians are in social media use, but also how they build users' trust and to gain authority of the content. According to Tenopir et al. (2016), trust is characterized by a certain measure of vulnerability, and incidentally, however social media outlets are still often not trusted in scholarly communication. However, earlier studies (Corritore, Kracher and Wiedenbeck 2003; Kelton, Fleischmann and Wallace 2008), supported that the Internet has become part of social interactions so much that they are now objects of trust worldwide. Therefore, the users' trust on social media may all depend on the attached value of authority decision making on the social media content from the information providers to attain social media authority.

What the study has reported is empirical data on how librarians describe their actions, choices, and opinions to create trust activities on social media, i.e. how the interviewed librarians think about this relationship and how they act accordingly. The themes

associated with librarians' trust-creating activities through content creation in order to establish social media authority in libraries as presented in this study needs further refinement and assessment. The main limitation of this study is that, it only covered one country and the findings were entirely based on interviews with academic librarians from three university libraries in Nigeria. Additionally, themes expressed in this study's reveal diverse views on libraries' obligation to create social media authority. Further study is needed to establish the prevalence of these views among librarians elsewhere. Notwithstanding this limitation, we believe that the themes emerged could be used to further clarify issues surrounding establishing users trust and social media authority in libraries. As social media becomes a more heavily used information source, even for things as critical as risks and crises, the gatekeeping function of that information also falls more into the hands of the library users, rather than the librarians. As such, it is important to continue learning more about this process, and future study on how credibility judgments about social media information can be made by the library users will be more illuminative.

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