Transforming the Library Service: From Library News Bulletin to Library Facebook Page

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Abstract

The study sets out to look at ways of transforming the library service by examining the trend of communication channels used by the Library of a Federal University of Agriculture in-Nigeria to engage and serve its patrons. This started with the Library News bulletin to library notice board and a Facebook page. The descriptive survey was used making use of questionnaire, library records, and analysis of the library's Facebook page as data collection instruments. The population for the study is 700 library users of which 10% of them were randomly selected to participate in the study. The study recorded a 100% response rate, probably because it was self-administered by the researchers. On analysis of the data collected, respondents noted that the Library Facebook page increases their knowledge on how their information needs could be met and also make academic progress, it also gave them an awareness of the periodic training programs of the library, and also increases their awareness of the library resources and services. It was also found that as more people were reached through the Library Facebook page, more users got registered with the library which increased the library patronage. The study concluded by making few suggestions on how to make the Library Facebook page more engaging.

Key words: *Library services, library Facebook page, library transformation, library users*

Introduction

Traditionally, libraries are known and regarded as a place where printed books are kept for people to read with the assistance of staff that organises means of accessing them, however, libraries have kept evolving with the evolution of digital contents and has now grown beyond books to information services. University libraries are established purposely to support teaching, learning and research activities of their parent bodies. Onifade (2009) noted that the effectiveness of a library as instrument of learning depend on its ability to provide the user with the information sought. It is therefore, important for university libraries to stock the broadest possible collections of learning resources in various formats. In order to add value to these collections it is also essential for them to ensure that these resources are used to justify the investment on them. As a result, libraries do embark on various means of promotion to attract users' attention to their resources for effective utilization. The Library under study is one of such university libraries that have used different forms of media to communicate information and engage with her users. Communication channels used by the Library started with the Library News bulletin in 2008, moved to library notice board in 2010 and in 2015, a Facebook page was created. This paper therefore, chronicles how the library has been transforming her services to reach her users irrespective of their locations.

Background Information of the Study Area

The Library is the main library of a Federal University of Agriculture. The University however implements a collegial system of library operation with each college having its own college library. Currently, the library has an average of 75,000 volumes of books and 2,399 volumes of journals. It also subscribes to some online databases, among which are, EBSCO host: an aggregator for scientific and social sciences journals and e-books and TEEAL (The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library) a stand-alone database that is accessed through the intranet. The Library is centrally located as other academic buildings revolve round it which makes it a center of attraction in the University. The library provides bibliographic and information services for all the academic programmes of the University.

In her efforts to meet the information needs of her community, the library makes use of a selective dissemination of information services (SDI) which is done by the Serials' section. This commenced in this wise; whenever there were new issues of a journal or journal title, the Serials' Librarian do make photocopies of the cover pages and send them to the

relevant departments, this was later translated to Library News Bulletin, of which information was abstracted and compiled into a bulletin format and rather than sending it only to the concerned departments, they were sent to all the Colleges where it was expected to be circulated to the various Departments in the Colleges. In 2008, other information on access to, and use of the library's resources were also added to the News Bulletin. By 2010, the Bulletin became famous within the campus and was handed over to the Automation Section of the Library to handle. This, therefore, boosted its acceptance within the University community as soft copies were also made available online.

By the year 2011, the Library Bulletin had become the library's voice to air and showcase the library's resources and services. However, by the year 2013, the bulletin was no longer regular due to dwindling fund, and by the end of 2013, the production of the bulletin stopped. Meanwhile, having taken over the production of the Bulletin by the Automation section, the Serials' Section devised another means of disseminating their contents through the use of the library's notice and bulletin board, with this arrangement, photocopies of important information relating to students and the University community were made and pasted on the notice board. Soon photocopies of other types of information started to appear on the notice board. However, the limitation of this was its inability to be disseminated real-time; users were expected to visit the library before they can have access to the information on the notice board. This led to the creation of a Facebook page by the Automation Department in August 2015. Initially, while this was being done, it was discovered that an account had earlier been created in 2012 which was inactive, so, the two accounts were merged to enhance effectiveness.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the users' awareness of library Facebook page
2. To determine the impact of the library Facebook page on library patronage.
3. To examine the usefulness of the library Facebook page to users
4. To extract information that will help in the use of the library Facebook page to serve the information needs of her users better.

Research Questions

1. Are the library users aware of her Facebook page?
2. What is the impact of the Facebook page on library patronage?

3.   Is the Facebook page useful to the library users?

4.   What areas can the library improve on her Facebook page?

Statement of the Problem

It is the desire of every library to enjoy maximum patronage from its users, and when this gradually reduces, it becomes worrisome. In order to retain its users, over the years, especially in the face of rapidly changing technology, the Library adopted various methods to reach out to its users; beginning with news bulletin to the use of notice board, and more recently to Facebook page. Hence, this study was initiated to assess this to see how well it is been done, the impact it has on library patronage and in helping to meet the users' information needs and also to devise means of improving upon it in order to achieve the desired result and possibly serve as a model to other libraries.

Review of Related Literature

Libraries are facing a lot of challenges these days as a result of rapidly changing technology, budget cut, changing demands of research, teaching, and learning and changing and sophisticated users who Onifade (2016) refers to as the 'Smart Generation'. Furthermore, Gardners and Davies (2014) observed that this generation is surrounded and immersed to a greater extent by technology; laptops, tablets, smartphones, and handheld devices of every size and shapes. Libraries, therefore, need to reposition their services in order to remain relevant to this smart generation library users. Campbell (2017) observed that in order to keep people coming to the library, librarians are looking at new fun way to attract people to the library. Corroborating this, Yi (2016) opined that Librarians need to find ways to promote services and resources to clients as effectively as possible and this should be designed to cause library users and non-library users to act in such a way that they will select library services and resources over those of competing services.

Over the centuries, one of the tools used to promote library service is the library news bulletin/ newsletter: these two terms are used synonymously. This had erstwhile been the avenue by which the library disseminates information on its services to the user community before the advent of technology. In identifying newsletters as a promotion tool in libraries Yi (2016) stated that it can be used to introduce new development as well as highlight current services. In the same way, Hamm (2016) claimed that "if you are looking for a way to communicate your success and promote your collection and programming a newsletter can be an effective marketing tool". The major shortcoming of

the library bulletin/newsletter, however, is that it is not as interactive. Frakas (2011) however, noted that the growth of participatory technologies and Web 2.0 has altered the environment in which individual access information and create knowledge. He stated that internet has made it possible for people to access information at the point of needs and tools like blogs; wikis etc has made it possible for anyone to share their idea with the world. Internet, therefore, offered a new way of connecting libraries with the users.

Alabi, Onifade, and Sokoya (2013) pointed out that the use of social media is rapidly spreading among different professionals including librarians as it provides a fast platform for information dissemination. According to CIARD (2009) "social media is a shift in how people discover, read and share news, information and content; it supports the human needs for social interaction with technology, broadcast media monologues… into social media dialogues…" Amongst the social media tools used for reaching out and engaging library users is Facebook. This is an online social networking site used to connect and interact with both distant and friends who are close-by. In the libraries, it has grossly been adopted to promote interaction with library users and to also promote the services of the library. The library Facebook has many parts to it ranging from Facebook profiles, group messages, chat platforms, wall posts and broadcasts, avenues for feedbacks and responses, etc. These sum up to making the communication between the library and her users interactive thereby translating into the transformation of the life of the user community. Vassilakaki and Garoufallou (2015) thoroughly and critically presented series of common practices for building and maintaining a Facebook page by the library; they found that Facebook features used by librarians in reaching out to the user community was the creation of the librarian's Facebook profile, group messages, wall posts, events, and friends.

Facebook, unlike the other social networking sites, has its roots in academia and remains unique in its organization of academic networks (Loving and Ochoa 2010). In a study conducted by Adomi and Ejirefe (2012) they found out that apart from using Facebook to enhance their social relationship with friends and families, they also use it to share and exchange academic information. In a related study by Sachs, Eckel, Edward and Langan (2011) majority of the respondents examined found Facebook to be a useful and engaging medium to learn about library resources and services. Further, in his review of studies conducted by Association of Research Libraries on the Facebookpresence of Association of Research Libraries (ARL) member institutions, particularly academic ones, Wan (2011) analysed comprehensively, their

Facebook pages in terms of content, launch time, and popularity and found that, the majority of these libraries maintain at least one Facebook page whose content typically focuses on library events, resource updates, etc. This presupposes that Facebook can actually be used to promote library's resources and services and subsequently transform people's lifestyle as a result of knowledge garnered from such platforms.

Methodology

The descriptive survey was used for this study and the data used are examination of library records, analysis of the library's Facebook page users and administration of a self-designed questionnaire. The library annual report file was used to determine the number of registered users' in the library for a period of five years (2011-2016). In addition, 70 copies of a self-designed questionnaire were administered to the library users on a Monday been the first working day of the week between 1pm-4pm. The questionnaire is in three parts. Part A deals with demographic information, Part B with library use and part C with Library Facebook page. The population for the study is 700 library users because the library seats 700 users at a time; hence, 10% of this population was used as the sample size. Also, information on users of the Facebook page from 2012 till date was extracted. Fliers on the awareness and use of the library's Facebook page by the University community was also distributed randomly within the university community, copies were also pasted on notice and bulletin boards of the library for a few weeks as a follow-up to the questionnaire administration in order to extract more data to enhance the study. After which engagements on the library's Facebook page were also harvested.

Demographic Information

The study recorded a 100% response rate because the questionnaire was administered in the library personally by the researchers with a pack of biscuit given to each respondent as motivation. Majority of the respondents were males representing (37)52.9%, while (33)47.1% were female. In addition, (62) 88.6% were students while 8(11%) were staffers. Only 7 out of the 10 Colleges in the University were represented in the study as follows: College of Animal Science and Livestock Production (COLANIM) 12(17%), College of Food Science and Human Ecology (COLFHEC) 11(16%), College of Engineering (COLENG) 4(6%), College of Physical Sciences (COLPHYS) 11(16%), College of Plant Science and Crop Production (COLPLANT) 10(14), College of Agricultural Management and Rural Development (COLAMURUD) 14(20%), and College of Management Sciences (COLMAS) 8(11%). Majority of the

respondents 59(84.3%) are regular library users, only 11(15.7%) of them indicated that they do not use the library regularly.

Table 1:
Awareness of Library Facebook Page among Library Users ₦=70

S/ No	Status	Aware	%	Not Aware	%
1	COLANIM	7	10	5	7.1
2	COLFHEC	6	8.6	5	7.1
3	COLENG	1	1.4	3	4.3
4	COLPHYS	8	11.4	3	4.3
5	COLPLANT	6	8.6	4	5.7
6	COLAMRUD	9	12.9	5	7.1
7	COLMAS	6	8.6	2	2.9
	TOTAL	43	61.5	27	38.5

The survey revealed that 43(61.5%) of the library users who responded to the questionnaire are aware of the Library Facebook page while 27(38.5%) were not aware. This shows that only a little above average are aware and this calls for more publicity so that more users will be attracted to the Facebook page. His is in tandem with Kidwell (2010) who reported a similar situation in her study in Trinity Music College in London and stated that a number of methods was used to create an awareness among the College student population. These include an all students' e-mail, an announcement on the College Intranet and a poster on the library notice board were used.

Table 2:
Impact of Library Facebook to Library Patronage

Years	Register Users	Facebook visit
2011/2012	4,082	Not active
2012/2013	9325	Not active
2013/2014	9,678	1,484
2014/2015	10,723	3,098
2015/2016	11,159	9,338
2016/2017	23,546	17,206

(Source: Library Annual Report file and Library Facebook page as at December 2, 2017)

It was discovered from the library records that as more people were reached through the Library Facebook page, more users got registered with the library; for instance the statistics extracted from the Facebook page indicated that 1,484 people were reached in 2014 and the library registered 9,678 users, in 2015 academic section, 3,098 people were reached through the Facebook page and the library recorded 10,723 users, in 2016, 9,338 people were reached and 11,159 users were registered during the 2016/17 session, in 2017, 17,206 were reached and 23,546 users were registered manually by the library. Logically this shows that as more people were reached on library Facebook page, the number of registered users of the library increases, however, we hope to conduct further research on this to determine the correlation of this assumption.

Table 3:
Usefulness of the Library Facebook Page to the users N= 185

S/No	Usefulness	Frequency	%
1	It opens my eyes to some information that I don't even think I needed.	6	8.6%
2	It increases my awareness of the library resources	9	12.8%
3	It stimulates my quest to know more on some topics	10	14.3
4	It increases my knowledge on some issues	25	35.7%
5	It makes me value the library more because of its training Programs	20	28.6%
	Total	185	100

Note: N=185 (>70) because the respondents wer instructed to pick more than one response as applicable to them.

The respondents were asked an open ended question on whether the Facebook is useful to them. The themes extracted from their responses were grouped into five and the frequency count was made. Majority of respondents (35.7%) stated that the Library Facebook page increases their knowledge on some issues, 28.6% stated that the library Facebook makes them value the library more as it makes them know of

the training programs organised by the library, 14.3% stated that the library post stimulate them to want to know more on some topics while 12.8% claimed that it increases their awareness of the library resources and the least respondents 8.6% confirmed that it made they discovered their information needs. Generally, it can be concluded that the Facebook page is found useful to users as all the respondents have positive comment on it.

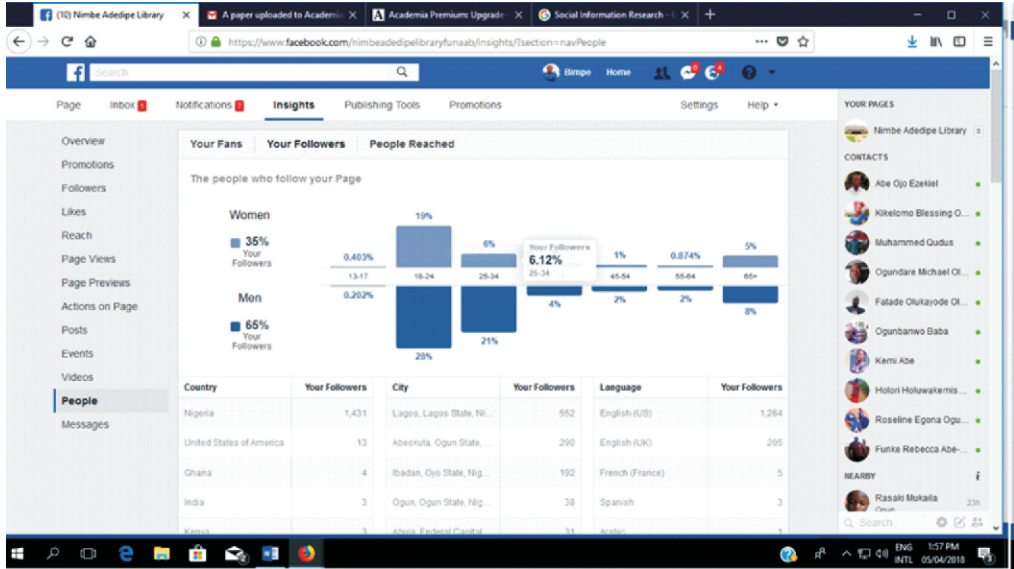## Recent engagements on the Library Facebook page

Figure 1: Percentage of people who followed the library Facebook page from December, 2017 to date by gender; female (35%) and male (65%)

Figure 2: Percentage of people who were either reached or who are fans of the library's Facebook page grouped by gender and age. 42% women and 57% men were reached, 34% women fans and 66% men fans were recorded respectively
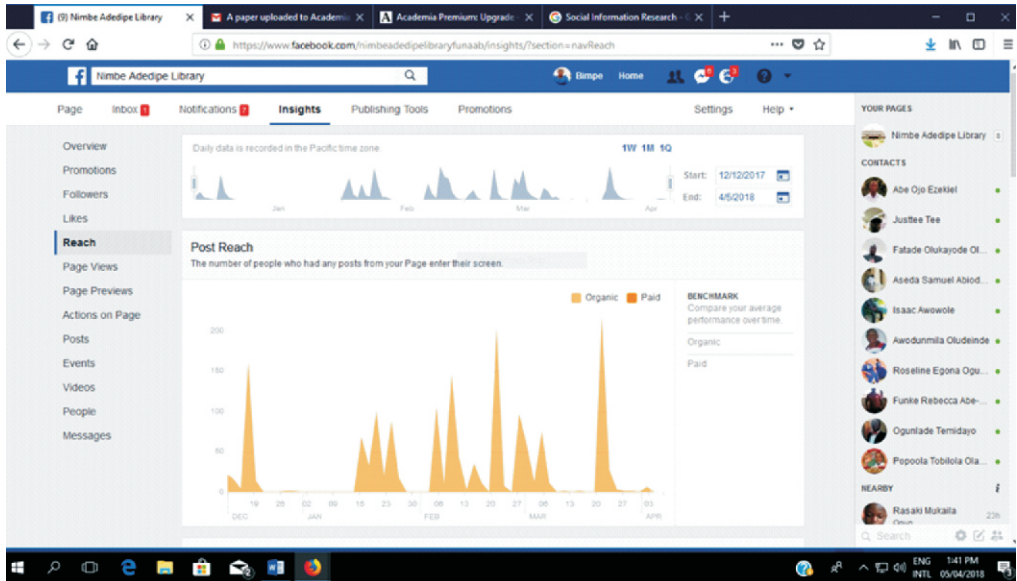

Figure 3: Graphical representation of people who had posts from the library's Facebook page entered their screen.
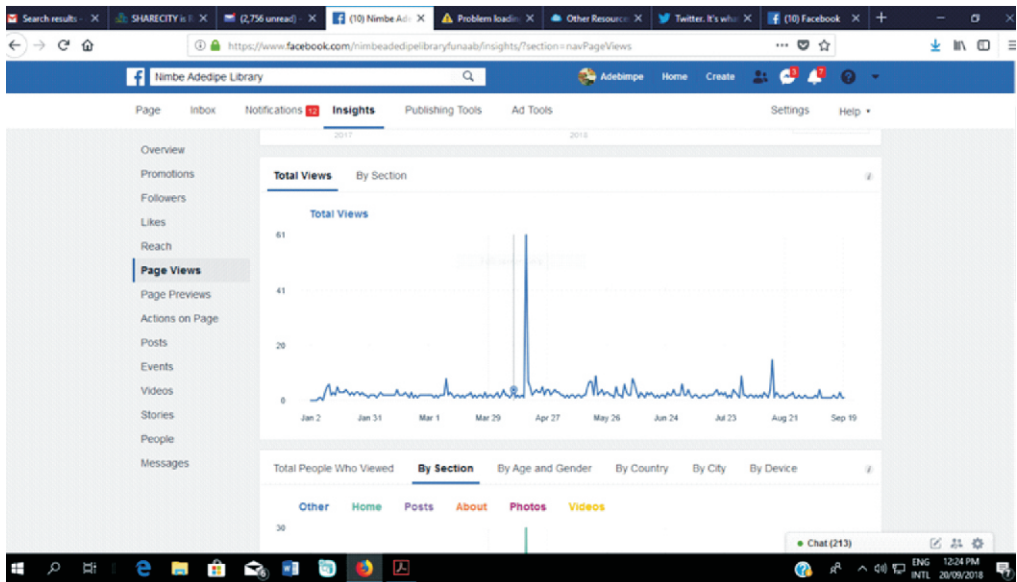

Figure 4: Graphical summation of people who viewed the library's Facebook from Jan to date
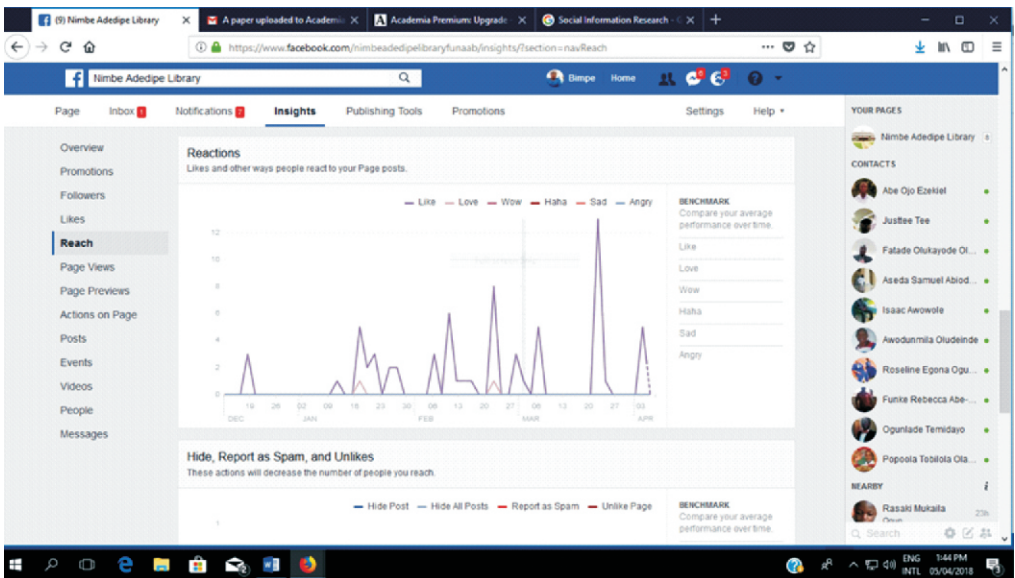
Figure 5: Graphical representation of people who reacted either by liking or other forms of reactions to posts made on the Facebook page
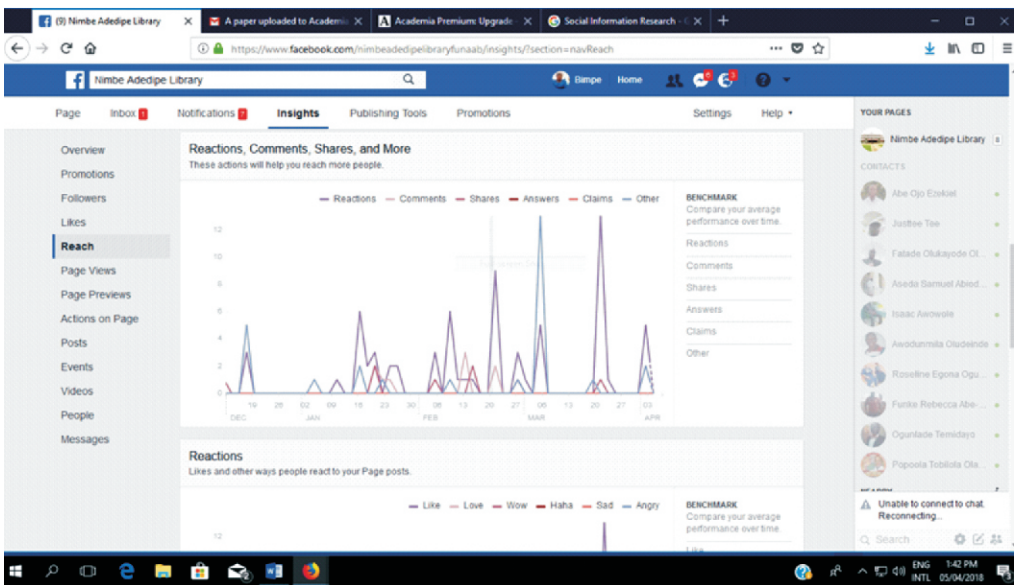

Figure 6: Graphical analysis of people who either commented or shared posts made on the page

Table 4:
On what areas can the library improve on her Facebook page?

S/No	Suggested Areas	Frequency	%
1	Create more awareness among library users	15	21.4
2	Employ content writers	25	35.7
3	Make it more engaging for users	27	38.6
4	Create RSS feeds	3	4.3
	Total	70	100

The highest ranked advice that the respondents offered the library was to make the Library Facebook more engaging. The users are looking for real-time experience, where they can chat up librarians and obtain quick and ready information. Onifade (2016) therefore, referred to this generation of library users as the smart generation who want to accomplish their desires as quickly and efficiently as possible. Next, to the issue of engagement, the users also want the library to include content writing on the Facebook, this also a form of engagement.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study reveals that in its efforts to provide services to its user community, the Library has continued to transform the medium use in reaching out to users by moving from the use of Library News Bulletin to creating a Library Facebook page. Though a good number of the respondents claimed they are aware of the Facebook page, it is important that more awareness should be created to make sure that all the library users become aware. Kidwell (2010) therefore opines that "having begun to exploit Web 2.0 technology within the library, the next challenge will be to act as evangelist introducing the concepts more widely within the institution".

The study also shows that as more people were reached through the library Facebook page, the number of registered users and the rate of library patronage also increases. It is, however, assumed that this is not a mere coincidence because the increment ratio has remained consistent for the past three years. On the usefulness of the Facebook page, the majority of the respondents indicated that it has increased their

knowledge on some issues while the least respondents stated that it has even made to realize their needs for certain information which they were erstwhile unaware of. This indicated that the Facebook page is beneficial to the users. Majority of the respondents, however, stated that they would like the library to make the page more engaging and interactive. They also want the library to employ content writer on the Library Facebook page. It is, therefore, necessary to note that in this digital age transforming library services would involve adopting new technology as means of providing services and reach out to the users and Facebook is a good starting point, however, Facebook cannot replace the help and care given by a librarian face-to-face but it can increase the library virtual space in a way that students will continue to seek personal contacts because Facebook is fundamentally about relationship (Jansen, 2017). Transforming the library is not going to happen overnight but a stitch in time saves nine!

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Section A: Demographic Information

1.   Level of Study ……………………………………………….......…………

2.   Course of Study …………………………………………….......………...

3.   College/Department ………………………………….…………….………

4.   Sex a) Male ( ) b) Female ( )

Section B: Library Use

5.   How often do use the library?
      a) very often ( ) b) often ( )c) not often ( )

6.   Please state your reason(s)for using the library
      a) to read for pleasure ( )
      b) To consult materials for assignment ( )
      c) To use library computer ()
      d) To ask Librarians for specific information ()
      e) to read for exams ( )
      f) Other please, specify……………………………………………
      ………………………………………………...………………………

Section C: Library Facebook Page

7.   Do you have a Facebook account? a) Yes ( ) b) No ( )

8.   Are you aware of the Library Facebook page? a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

9.   If Yes, please answer the following questions:
      a) Have you visited it? a) Yes ( ) b. No ( )
      b) Do you find it useful? a) Yes ( ) b. No ( )
      c) In what ways is it useful to you? ………………………………….
      ...…………………………………………………………………………
      ……………………………………………………...……………………

10.   If your answer to question No 9ais No, Please state the reason(s) ……
      …………………………………………………………………………

11.   If your answer to question No 9b is No why?………………......……

12.   What other advice do you have for the library operating her Facebook account? …..…

      Thank you for your time.