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Abstract

The study surveyed the strategies used in marketing library and Information services in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Amaku, Awka, Anambra state Nigeria. It was discovered that the strategies used in marketing are ineffective compared to the changing situations in contemporary university environment. Personal experiences as a staff in the library were used to draw inferences for the study. The major marketing strategy used were face-to-face interaction with library user, good communication skills, use of library notice board, display and exhibition, institutions website and use of library as a course. All these strategies though utilized are not really effective in reaching out to non-library users. It is expected that marketing strategies should be all inclusive in its approach and methodology. There is hope, if the library can explore online marketing through facebook and other social media, this will make it easier to reach out to a wider audience. Also, innovative practices should be embedded so as to bring the users to the library.

**Keywords:** Marketing, Marketing Strategies, Library Services, Information Services, Information Products, Nigeria
1.0 Introduction

The university library undertakes the responsibility of locating, procuring and supplying the right type of information to students, researcher and lecturers at the right time and made information constantly available to users (Igbokwe, Ezeji and Obidike, 2010). Nevertheless, for these resources in university to be effectively utilized by the users, the resources must not just be readily available but must be brought to the knowledge of the library users. Marketing is gaining a considerable connotation in libraries (Veeramani and Vinayagamoorthy, 2010). Marketing strategy as noted by Aderibigbe (2015) has become very essential and important in the field of library and information sciences.

The interest in marketing has tremendously increased over the last two decades in almost all kind of libraries throughout the world (Gupta, 2003). This cannot be unconnected with the fact that the manner with which library services are provided are changing on daily basis. In which case, library services are not static in nature but progressive. This, however, is in consonance with one of the laws of library science that says the “library is a growing organism”. Library and information products and services are now being presented as commodities that can be accessed, exchanged and sold (Edewor, Okite-Amughoro, Osuchukwu and Egreajen, 2016). In other words, the concepts and philosophy of library services is therefore changing in every facet. Libraries which hitherto are regarded as social service institution is gradually seeing its products in the light of commodity like other business organization.

Marketing of library and information services in contemporary digital and information age is a necessity, especially in the university community. Marketing is a necessity, if libraries and librarians are to remain relevant in the academic community. The proliferation of information and communication technology (ICTs) has opened a window of opportunity for librarians in university to maximally exploit, this include the introduction of non-conventional library services as well as using internet and its allied functionalities to reach out to members of the university community.
1.1 **Objective of the Study**

The general purpose of the study is to evaluate the marketing strategies that are being applied to the provision of library and information services at Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital. Specifically, the study will:

i. Highlight on marketing and marketable products in libraries

ii. Explain the rationale for integrating marketing into library service

iii. Discuss the nexus between marketing and library usage

iv. Evaluate the strategies used in marketing library products and services in the library under study.

v. Make recommendations for enhanced marketing strategies.

1.2 **Methodology**

The study will be carried out using a qualitative approach. Librarians in the library were interviewed informally. Also, brainstorming sessions with colleagues were also used to draw inferences. Literature reviews were also used to supplement the interview and brainstorming.

1.3 **Statement of Problem**

Libraries, like any other organization requires innovative and creative approach to striving in competitive environment. Innovation and creativity has become a necessity in the provision of library and information provision of library and information services in any library /whether public, university, academic special etc. The ever changing library environment and user community demands that libraries get closer to the library patrons to sustain its relevance as key factor in educational activities at any level. This justifies the need for marketing of library and attraction of library patrons to the library.

Despite the fact that marketing is recognized as an important factor in bringing the library user back to the library, the marketing strategies used by various libraries in marketing their products and services is not clearly demonstrated through empirical studies. Although, there are researches by several authors in marketing, they focus on types of products marketed in libraries and challenges faced in marketing library services, especially in other parts of Nigeria. There is, therefore poor coverage of marketing strategies in relation to university
libraries in south east Nigeria. This research therefore aims to cover marketing strategies of Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital as a focal point.

2.0 Marketing: an overview

The general concept of marketing is an organized process of planning, implementation, pricing, promotion and dissemination of ideas, products and services for individual and organizational satisfaction (Samanian and Khosropananh, 2016). Marketing of information resources and services covers all those activities involved in satisfying services and making a profit for the library that makes use of available resources to the maximum (Aderibigbe, 2015). In other words, every actions ranging from the selection to organization of information resources for the users is termed marketing of library and information services.

Marketing in the context of information products and services, is defined as a concept of sensitively serving and satisfying the information needs of all those who are involved in education, scholarship, research and development, business, trade industry etc (Kumar, 2014). Marketing in libraries implicatively insinuates reviewing the customer needs and popularizing products and accommodations offered by the libraries so that the objective of maximum utilization of the library resources can be achieved (Deshpande, 2017). Library marketing is a dynamic system of economic activities where the library considers the real and the potential needs of the users, adapts to them and thus influences the search on the market, predisposes the readers for library products and services (Yankova, 2013).

Marketing is sometimes concerned with the full range of activities that are undertaken in order to be certain of meeting customer’s needs and receiving enough value in return for doing so (Busari, Anyankola and Ladipo, 2015). Benson, Udo-Anyanwu and Onuoha (2016) citing Vij (2012) and Igbeka (2008) buttressed that marketing covers activities that connect the organization to those parts of its outside world that use, buy and sell or influence the output it produces, the benefits and services it offers. It is human activity that is directed at satisfying the needs of library users through an exchange process. Marketing implies exchange of relationship
between the service provider and the service, consumer with the aim of satisfying the consumer’s needs (Ogomo, 2015).

Marketing involves interaction between consumer and the commodity on one hand, and provider of the commodity and the consumer of the commodity on the other hand (Busari, Ayankola & Ladipo, 2015). Marketing is essentially about reaching the users and informing them of library services and activities using technologies that match users needs (Adekunmisi, 2017). Marketing of library services is the effective execution of all the activities involved in increasing satisfaction of users by providing maximum value to them (Ekere, Akanwa & Benson, 2015).

According to Edewor et al (2016), and Adekunmisi (2017), marketing of library services and information products involves a whole gamut of processes aimed at determining the needs, wants and demands of library users through designing and delivering appropriate products and services more effectively for the purpose of achieving organizational goals and objectives. Marketing is not so much about “selling” information products to library users as it is more about spreading the word about potentially useful new tools (Ekere, Akanwa & Benson, 2016). They further sees it as one of the cardinal instrument through which information (both raw and processed) are transmitted to its member.

Marketing is therefore the process of bringing the value of a product or service to the knowledge of the potential and actual user. It involves the identification of the various user group, determining what they desire, designing, developing and delivering those services, and promoting/publicizing them to intended users. It is all about ensuring that users are fully aware of the available library products and services and utilizes these services to meet their information needs. Marketing of information according to Ekere, Akanwa & Benson (2015) means transference of information to the potential user/customer.

2.1 Marketable Product in Libraries

There are many products and services of information centres that can be marketed such as new arrivals, references services, CAS, SDI, indexing and abstracting services etc. (Shah &
Ahmad, 2016). Marketable information–based products and services in the library include reference, referral, circulation, inter-library loan, selective dissemination of information (SDI), bibliographic information, abstract and indexing, customized research and development, current awareness, reader’s advisory, and information literacy services (Edewor et al, 2016)

Bamigbola (2013) opined that digital information services and products such as e-resources, OPAC, CD-ROM, Online reference service, OAIR, Internet search, e-books, e-journals and computer laboratory can be marketed. Therefore, the various services rendered in libraries are marketable services and the various resources provided are marketable products.

3.0 Rationale for Integrating Marketing into Library and Information Services

The arrival of the information age, where information provision is an increasingly important commercial activity; coupled with new technological developments bringing together hitherto disparate activities in information supply have led to a change in the role of libraries and librarians (Edewor et al, 2016). With regards to the internet age, academic libraries has been using website to provide information about the library, provide access to information resources as well as offer web-based service (Siddike, Munshi and Mahamud, 2013). Similarly, the challenges of budget cuts, increased user base, rapid growth of materials, rising costs, networking demands, competition by database vendors, and complexity in information requirement are forcing professional to adopt marketing to improve the management of library and information centres (Kutu and Olabode, 2018).

There is a growing need for understanding and employing marketing in libraries and information services throughout the world (Gupta, 2003). Librarians are being compelled to use new skills and strategies in order to change, survive and continue to compete in the world of virtual information (Aderibigbe, 2015). According to Eze, Ezekwuoke and Okeke (2015), libraries must change according to changing market conditions. Libraries therefore need to adopt a standard design of services and products, as well as develop communication methods and a feedback mechanism to improve service delivery. The challenges of inadequate funding,
increased user base, the rapid growth of material, rising costs, networking demands, competition by database vendor, declined in library patronage etc are forcing professional to adopt marketing to improve the management of library and information centers in Nigeria (Suleiman & Amuta, 2015).

3.1 Nexus between Marketing and Library Usage

Aderbigbe and Farouk (2017), citing Gupta and Savard (2010), pointed out that marketing has become relevant in the provision of library and information services and that information resources and services that are not marketed effectively may not be heavily patronized. To attract more and more users to the library, library staff needs to extend promotion and cooperation to users and marketing their services (Patil & Pradhan, 2014). Chegwe and Anaehobi (2015), believes that effective marketing can increase the use of library services, assist to educate the user and non-users alike, change user’s perception and idea, identify users need and satisfy them with appropriate product and services as well as promote the reputation of librarians.

Since the focal point of marketing is to ensure that library users both actual and potential become aware of existing library and information services provided, there is no doubt that it has the capacity to increase the user base of the library. In other words, there is a connection between marketing of library services and the increase usage of library product and services.

According to Gupta (2003), the reasons for applying marketing in any library is not to increase profit but to increase in user satisfaction and increase of funding in turn, since increased customer satisfaction will often result in their increased willingness to use and pay for services offered. Marketing according to Onoyeyan (2015), draws users’ attention to the available services and information resources of the library. Effective utilization of resources and services can be achieved through marketing approach. The impact of the information technology and the option of the marketing approach will help improve services for users and
enhance the reputation of library and information services and professionals (Eze, Ezekwuoke and Okeke, 2015).

As noted by Konya (2013), library services will reach their users easily when they use advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations which are component of the marketing communication. Edewar et al (2016) averred that for university libraries to effectively market their services in order to attract more users, in this digital era, there is need for a robust marketing plan. Kutu and Olabode (2018) citing Gupta (2013) posits that effective marketing provides the means by which users are aware of the services of the library and their value. Also, that having patronage determines the worth of the library and effective marketing is one of the factors that determine library use. Libraries and information services need to adopt marketing practices in order to overcome the problem of underutilization (Suleiman & Amuta, 2015).

4.0 Function of Marketing in Library and Information Centres

The primary goal of marketing communication is to reach a defined audience to affect its behaviour by informing and reminding them of library products and services. Marketing aims to identify the client base, to determine and fill its needs, wants and demands by designing and delivering appropriate products and services (Eze, Ezekwuoke and Okeke, 2015). Marketing provides libraries with an opportunity to see as to how they can offer effective and efficient services to their customers or users (Ekere, Akanwa & Benson, 2015).

According to Busari, Ayankola and Ladipo (2015), marketing can make a different in any enterprise once customer/user is involved. This to them is why it is seen as the process of getting the customers to place a high value on the services so that they will want to consume more or support them. Marketing ensures that awareness is created in order for the value of the library to be evident (Onoyeyan, 2015). Libraries and information centres have realized that by using marketing principles and techniques, they can understand better their users needs, justifying funding and communicate more effectively with a variety of external audience (Suleiman & Amuta, 2015).
Marketing as opined by Gupta (2003) helps show a library staff’s expertise, further an organization’s mission, promote productivity by quickly and efficiently finding the right information at the right time, and add value to an organization’s product. The purpose of marketing is to increase the consumer satisfaction and identify the better way to achieve organizational goals, (Kumar, 2017). Marketing offers both a theory and process by which academic libraries can link products, results and roles (Busari, Ayankola and Ladipo, 2015).

5.0 Strategies Used in Marketing Library Products and Services in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital Amaku, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

The following strategies are used in marketing library services in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Amaku-Awka.

a. **Library Orientation:** Library orientation usually organized for fresh students by the university library serve as a viable platform for marketing library products and services. In the course of the orientation programmes, the students are informed of the library and its services, and the relevance of the library, its resources and services to their academic pursuit. However, since the orientation is for first year students, it has the advantage of creating room to reach a wider community and acts an avenue of catching the students’ young and getting them familiarize with the library and its resources on time. Also, experience has shown that most students, especially, the first year students may be fully engrossed with their registration process in order to meet up with the deadline usually given to them. In most cases, they are not regularly available to be part of the orientation programmes. The implication is that, most students miss out of this rare opportunity of being acquainted with library services provided them to meet up with their academic expectations.

b. **Notice boards:** The notice board is used in keeping library users abreast of services offered in the university library. It has the advantage of self explanation. It really helps in marketing the library to users of the library. The disadvantage of this approach is that, only those physically present in the library can actually read what is being pasted in the notice
board. Also, this approach is limited in terms of coverage. However, library notice board is usually located in prominent places where users can easily see or access information pasted on them.

c. **Fliers/Handbills:** Fliers and handbills are used in marketing library services: These fliers/handbills are usually pasted in the various notice boards in the institution. This approach unlike the library notice board has the advantage of reaching a wider populace; it is therefore, more effective compared to the library notice board. However, not every student has interest in reading what is on the notice board if it is not their result. This also is also problematic in terms of the extent this can go in marketing library and information services.

d. **Face-to-face communication:** This is another means of marketing library services indirectly. The way and manner with which library staff communicates and relates with library users also serves as means of marketing library services.

e. **Use of Library as a course:** Use of Library as a course being taught by librarians from the library, serves as a potential marketing strategy. This strategy as good as it may be, has the major weakness of the student just being interested in passing the course as requirement for graduating rather than imbibing the culture of using the library to supplement the lectures given to them. In other words, the cardinal objective of use of library as a course in most cases is usually defeated.

f. **Library Displays:** Display of new arrivals of library resources known as current awareness services (CAS) is also a means of marketing library products. Through this, library users are kept up-to-date about current titles recently added to the library collections. This avenue also serve as marketing strategy for the library.

g. **Library catalogue:** Library catalogue in the institution serve as another means of marketing library and products. This approach is only relevant to the users of the library that are physically present at the library.
6.0 Summary of Findings in Relation to the Strategies Used in the Library

A critical analysis of the strategies used in marketing library products and services in the surveyed library shows that:

- **Low level of marketing consciousness:** the level of marketing consciousness in the library is abysmally low and does not in any way yield the desired results. Librarians seem not to have a full grasp of the need for marketing in this dispensation, lack of awareness of the relevance of integrating marketing is a challenge, because, experience shows that level of participation in any meaning venture is a function of the awareness level.

- **Absence of marketing policy:** it is clear from the findings that there is no policy to guide marketing activities in the library

- **Reliance on traditional methods:** the library seems to rely mostly on the traditional method of marketing library services; the fundamental weakness of these conventional methods is the inability to reach a wider populace simultaneously, especially in the face of digital environment. Most of the strategies are purely for already existing users, mostly first year students. It is not all embracing, for instance, how can the library be marketed to faculty members that do not use the library? If library is being marketed to newly registered students through orientation, how is the library being marketed to newly recruited staff in the institution?

- **Under utilization of social networks:** there is no doubt the entire society is being overwhelmed by the undeniable and penetrating influence of information technologies, with is functional tools such as social media platforms. Though, the institution host its website, other tools such as facebook, whatsapp, twitter handles is yet to be utilize market the library and its services to the immediate community.

- **Low level of marketing skills among library staff:** it is crystal clear that most library staff in the library do not possesses the requisite skills necessary for effective marketing of
library products. This low level of marketing skills cannot be divorced from the nature of training acquired in library schools, which lays more emphasis on conventional approaches.

6.1 Recommendation

In line with the findings of the study the following are hereby recommended:

- **Sensitization of library staff on the need for intensive marketing of library products:** There is need to organize an in-house training that is focused on sensitizing library staff on the expediency of marketing library services in the university community. Through this sensitization, ideas and new strategies can be discovered and applied in the institution.

- **Adopting of all-embracing approach:** Librarians should endeavour to adopt an all-embracing approach to marketing library products and services. It should not just be about the already existing users, because there are many out there in the university community exploring alternative information sources, such group of people can be drawn back to the library through intensive marketing strategies.

- **Reviving of selective dissemination of information (SDI):** The library can utilize SDI as means of marketing library products and services to the community. However, this can only be effective, if librarians are willing to take the library services to the door step or faculty levels where the users in the community are. We cannot afford to wait for them to come; we must take the library to them. Most corporate organizations are gradually taking their business to the door step of potential customers; libraries cannot be exempted from this approach. Members of the university community must know that we exist and that we are existing for them. Nevertheless, for this approach to be successful, efforts should be made to have a profile of members of the university communities and their subject areas of interest.

- **Utilization of social media platform:** Librarians should collaborate with the ICT unit of the institution or web managers, to ensure that social media platforms like facebook, blogs, whatsapp and twitter are utilized to market library products and services.

- **Understanding of libraries already in the digital space:** It is also important that libraries send their staff to other libraries that are fully engaged in marketing their library products to
under study them and know what they are doing. Through this, marketing skills can be acquired at minimal cost.

- Change of approach to library services: it is imperative that librarians change their approach to the provision of library products and services. In this digital age, efforts should be made to integrate ICT to the full delivery of library service to the users.

7.0 Conclusion

The evaluation of the marketing strategies used in the library of Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Amaku-Awka shows that the library services though marketed in the institution, has not really been effective. Worth nothing, is that the library has not explored their institution website as channel for marketing library products and services. It is safe therefore, to conclude that marketing strategies in this institution has not been effective. It is for that reason, that it became pertinent that librarians should be innovative and pragmatic in ensuring that library products and services are marketed to both potential and actual users of the library. Furthermore, social media should be integrated as means of marketing library products and services. Nevertheless, librarians should be encouraged to acquire marketing skills and competencies in order to effectively market their library products and services. It is therefore, obvious that there is an urgent need to reinvigorate the marketing strategies used in university libraries in Nigeria.

This paper therefore is a wakeup call not only for university libraries, but other libraries. Efforts should be made to ensure that user is fully aware of information resources and services available to the users. This no doubt is in line with the philosophy of Ranganathan that information resources are for use and the library as social institution is a growing organism and must therefore adapt to changing times.
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