

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)

Libraries at University of Nebraska-Lincoln

February 2022

MARKETING OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES IN TWO MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

Helen Olubunmi Akinade

Mountain Top University, Nigeria, hojakinade@mtu.edu.ng

Adeyemi Adewale Akinola

Mountain Top University, Nigeria, akinolaadeyemi@yahoo.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac>



Part of the [Scholarly Communication Commons](#)

Akinade, Helen Olubunmi and Akinola, Adeyemi Adewale, "MARKETING OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES IN TWO MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA" (2022). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 6851.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/6851>

MARKETING OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES IN TWO MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA.

ABSTRACT

The study assess the impact of marketing strategies in two medical institutions in Lagos State. It provides a direct test of applicability of marketing strategies that would enhance better services for the benefit of library patrons in a competitive and technologically driven environment. Data was collected from two libraries selected for this study. A total of 25 questionnaires were distributed to professionals in the two libraries. Returned questionnaires were analyzed with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The result shows that majority of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement indicating positive attitude towards marketing, while very few respondents strongly disagreed with the issue of marketing in library services. Patron survey, library website, developing new services and advertising were ranked as the highest ways of marketing libraries whereas, Mailings/Newsletters, attracting new patrons and maintaining a patron database were ranked low. The relevance of this study confirmed the nexus between marketing and library and information services. It also provides with the aim of providing actionable intelligence data to justify library services as an indispensable part of any institution which helps to maximize information services to users in a more efficient and effective manner.

Keywords: Marketing, library services; Information services; Medical Libraries

INTRODUCTION

Information no doubt is an essential commodity that is required in the day-to-day activities, especially in an academic environment. One of the critical missions of the Library is to mobilize, provide and organize resources that would support its parent institutions vision and goals. Libraries in academic institutions are saddled with the responsibility of managing vast amount of information stored in different formats and are needed for a successful academic pursuit.

In the recent time, Libraries are facing unprecedented changes and challenges. The emergence of information technology is creating new ways of providing information, there by passing the traditional roles of the Libraries. The real challenge posed to the library by the emerging Information Technology (IT) is not how to manage the resources but how to turn these resources into services. Gupta (2003) gave the vivid picture of this scenario when he affirmed that the notion of services rendered in the library has drastically changed from staff assisted to self-service and from in-house to out-reach. Thus, the focus is changing from the size of the Library collection to the services being provided by the Library. The changes are more evidence in educational approaches, the availability of new technologies and new methods of sourcing for information. All these are affecting the way Library now provide services for its patrons.

The library is such a serious building not only for the storage of intellectual collections but also provide seating arrangements for its readers as well as workspaces for library staff. The library patrons are in different categories and these include students, lecturers, researchers, and students from other institutions that want information for research, assignments or quest for more information in their respective area of specialization. The generality of users see the library as an icon, a haven within an alien world where they can receive basic services for their academic needs.

The librarians in the past have not given much considerable attention to the area of communicating libraries resources to other members of academic communities outside the course tagged 'the use of library' or occasional 'Library orientation' programme but the trend of online information resources and services which have made it possible for many users to retrieve information within the confinement of their offices or rooms. The implication of this is that Librarians are now more proactive in the discharge of their duties, so as to ensure that

users are exposed to available services in the Library (Sharma and Bhardwaj, 2009). Therefore, using the appropriate medium to market Library services and products is extremely important as this will enable the library achieved its mission to the parent institution. This corroborates with the finding of Munshi (2008) on marketing of library and information products in special libraries in Bangladesh who established that marketing library services enable libraries and Librarians integrate into both today's and tomorrow's emerging global world.

Though marketing of information and Library services is not new to libraries, Renbong (1997) trace the origin back to the 1870s. However the concept is alien to some Nigerian librarians who still cling to traditional style of providing information services. These traditional functions which include manual selection, acquisition, storage, processing, circulation as well as referral and reference services are back office functions since only limited members of the library staff interact with patrons and the interaction is mostly at the initiative of the library patrons. Therefore, it is imperative that the library professionals understand the variety and breadth of the resources used for the learning activities as well as having knowledge on how to utilize the state-of-art technologies that facilitate the context of learning and education.

MEDICAL LIBRARIES

The Libraries in Medical Institutions play a significant role in sourcing information for researchers, scholars, students, clinicians, etc in medicine and allied medicine fields. The information needed is meant to enrich their knowledge in clinical researches and health management. Popoola (1998) attested that the health professionals need current, relevant, detailed, timely and reliable information to offer high quality health care services to the clientele. In particular, as information and communication technology (ICT) advanced and mutually influence one another, so also do their progression affects the way libraries acquire and disseminate information. Hence, the information revolution has placed significant pressures on libraries to ensure that available services are accessible to users. Thus, the onus is on the Library personnel to determine the needs and wants of library users in order to deliver the desired service more effectively and efficiently.

Basically, a Library operates routinely with a known set of users or patrons, handling important resources called information. When a user visits the Library, he believes that he will find information that would meet his or her need (s). It is therefore imperative for the library to

create a structure, and avenue where desired information is retrieved and accessible in a timely manner to the users.

Today, technology has changed our social and economic life. The mode of sourcing and retrieving information has changed drastically; people work at home or on the web with flexible timetables and more and more virtual resources are emerging in different fields. Attesting to this fact, Schmidt (2004) submitted that with the increased “googleisation” the value of the Library is being called into question and the 21st century students are making new demands on Library service provisions. Therefore, there is need to develop and implement marketing plan and strategies that would enhance library products and services.

Giving the importance of library in pursuit of knowledge and achieving institutional goals and mission, this paper seeks to examine the impact of marketing library services and products in two medical institutions in Lagos State.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Specifically, the aim of this paper is to explore the usage of the marketing plans and strategies in the Library and information environment through the following objectives;

- (a) Identifying factors influencing users’ patronage of the library and information services in medical libraries.
- (b) Determining the marketing strategies employed by the medical libraries and identifying ways they advertise their services.

RESEARCH QUESTION

To accomplish this task effectively, the study seeks to answer the following basic questions.

1. Does the Library provide sufficient user orientation programme?
2. What are the factors influencing the patronage of the library?
3. Does the Library personnel consider marketing the services provided?
4. How can the Library services be marketed effectively?
5. What are the information technologies that are available in these Libraries?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research. The population consisted of twenty five (25) profession. The article adopts a survey method using the questionnaire instrument for data collection. The questionnaire consisted primarily the issues regarding their attitudes toward marketing and the marketing of library services. There were also other items that ask about the extent to which market related activities were part of the respondent's work responsibility, and how important the library users perceive these activities. The author employed the services of a field assistant, who met the respondents and explained the purpose of the study. All professionals in the two libraries totaled 25 were served the questionnaire. The entire questionnaires totals 25 which represent 100% were retrieved. The main dependent variables in the study were a variety of librarians' attitudes toward marketing, for example, whether they perceive any benefits in library marketing. For example whether they were knowledgeable about marketing, and their degree of involvement in certain marketing related activities. In analyzing the data collected for this study, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used and the result were presented in simple tables and charts.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Items to measure respondents' level of agreement to marketing in library services

Variables	Strongly agreed		agreed		Strongly disagreed		Disagreed	
	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	Freq	%
Marketing is relevant to the needs of libraries	14	56.0	10	40.0	0	0.0	1	4.0
I am knowledgeable about marketing techniques	2	8.0	15	60.0	0	0.0	2	8.0
Libraries should market themselves more like other businesses do	6	24.0	13	52.0	3	12.0	0	0.0
Development of new library products and services is important	15	60.0	10	40.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Determining how much to charge for some library services is important	13	52.0	8	32.0	0	0.0	4	16.0
Finding new ways to deliver services to patrons is important	19	76.0	4	16.0	2	8.0	0	0.0
Good public relations activities are important to a library	19	76.0	6	24.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
It is more difficult to apply marketing techniques to libraries than business	7	28.0	4	16.0	5	20.0	3	12.0
It is important to make the public aware of everything the library has to offer	20	80.0	4	16.0	0	0.0	1	4.0
Library needs marketing to survive in an increasing competitive environment	17	68.0	7	28.0	0	0.0	1	4.0
Marketing is unnecessary because we barely have enough resources to meet current demand for library services	6	24.0	0	0.0	13	52.0	6	24.0
It is important to constantly monitor the wants and needs of potential patrons	12	48.0	8	32.0	0	0.0	2	8.0
Marketing is not a high priority in my library	3	12.0	8	32.0	8	32.0	5	20.0

Table 2: Ranking of marketing strategies employed by the medical libraries and ways they marketing their services

Importance to the library	Ranking									
	1		2		3		4		5	
	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%
Advertising / Promotion	4	16.0	0	0.0	6	24.0	7	28.0	1	4.0
Mailings / Newsletters	1	4.0	3	12.0	5	20.0	4	16.0	5	20.0
Patron survey	4	16.0	0	0.0	3	12.0	7	28.0	6	24.0
Attracting New patrons	4	16.0	1	4.0	3	12.0	4	16.0	8	32.0
Developing new services	4	16.0	2	8.0	3	12.0	7	28.0	2	8.0
Maintaining a patron database	4	16.0	0	0.0	3	12.0	4	16.0	7	28.0
Library Website	4	16.0	0	0.0	5	20.0	7	28.0	1	4.0

From Table 1 analysis was conducted in this section to determine the level of agreement with 13 items related to library personnel attitude towards marketing of library services, as well as their level of knowledge about marketing and their involvement in marketing activities. Majority of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement indicating positive attitude towards marketing, while very few respondents strongly disagreed with the issue of marketing in library services.

From Table 2 analysis and ranking of marketing strategies and ways of marketing libraries was conducted. Patron survey, library website, developing new services and advertising were ranked as the highest ways of marketing libraries. This shows that libraries need to deploy reliable and fast means of relating information to their users.

However, Mailings/Newsletters, attracting new patrons and maintaining a patron database were ranked low. This indicates that library users no longer attracted to the old ways of information disseminations.

DISCUSSION

I interacted with the librarians in these libraries and physically assesses the resources that are available in these libraries. I discovered that these libraries have electronic copies of some journals, free online databases, internet facility which is highly subsidized, document delivery service, private reading rooms for senior lecturers and separate rooms for seminars and workshop/or group discussion (exclusive to the Medical Library, CMUL).

The NIMR library does bibliographic compilation on topical issues, prepares indexes, extraction from local and foreign journals for manuscript publication, data analysis, diagnoses and solves computer related problems, et al. However, the issue is that these services have not been brought to the awareness of library users. The truth is that the civil service syndrome has made librarians to wait for users to come for them rather than selling the library on its value. Some librarians acknowledged this fact, and opined that they are not familiar with the concept of marketing.

It is obvious from the data collected that opportunities for these libraries are immense and therefore need to employ adequate marketing strategies to make use of these opportunities to the maximum. The library is poised to work with more zeal and dynamism to earn more income on its services and achieve a special status.

Thus, in order to achieve the objective of this study, an analysis of internal environment as a useful tool to generate marketing options for the library must be determined with reference to the objectives of the parent institution.

Table 2: SWOT analysis of the two libraries

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
A well structured library building	Lack of appropriate technology in place to benefit from the collection of other libraries	Location of library where other international libraries exist	In conducive and harsh environment
An existing rich collection of text books, international and local journals, internet facility, etc	Deterioration of library reading facilities	Possible ease of complementing collection with those of other institutions, given the appropriate technology	Decaying infrastructure and facilities
High-powered Personnel	Inadequate skills, human and resources	Possible training of staff locally and internationally	Inadequate funding
Executive reading room, simulation rooms for teaching clinical skills	Decline in growth rate of collection		Bloated student population
Enjoy autonomy Status	Non-availability of advertising/promoting resources		Archaic and outdated resources
Attained reputation as one of the leading medical institution	Inability to provide on line searching to users		Inadequate space for reading purposes
Having various categories of user	Non-availability of electronic thesis, dissertation and undergraduate projects		Theft and mutilation of collections
Broad-based influential and well placed alumni	Inadequate personnel of reports		Inadequate security for collections
Library operates an open access to its collection	Inadequate reading space		
	Obsolescence of skills		

From Table 3 the above table revealed the SWOT analysis of these libraries. This will enable the library to identify the internal and external factors that are favourable and those that are unfavourable in achieving their set objectives.

RECOMMENDATION

What is clear so far is that, marketing is an integral part of the library service, because it has to do with basic principles of librarianship i.e. to develop good collection and user-oriented services. Librarians managing health information resources should be willing to embrace incorporate marketing strategies as this will enhanced its TQM (total quality management, collection assessment, resources sharing and services assessment).

As information technology advanced, librarians in special libraries need to understand this new dimension in information provision and formulate appropriate marketing techniques that would make library services more effective.

Knowing the goals and vision of the library in line with parent institution is essential for the marketing programs. This will enable the library management to evaluate their roles, deliver specific programs that will meet the specific user's needs

Conducting user studies will enable library to know the resources are suitable for them and will also help library to get feedback. Therefore, library managers should consider recruiting new people with market-oriented experience.

Since web pages have become more common, library web designers must use distinctive portals to help online library marketing efforts.

Use of marketing mix method such as advertising and public relations as a promotional method will enable personal contact with patrons.

Following these marketing strategies will help libraries not only in their sustenance, but also in the sustenance of their information resources and services.

CONCLUSION

It is now obvious that without any promotional effort, some key individuals may not patronize the library. The value of marketing library's products and services has been recognized and we library staff need to develop and formalized our services and find the best ways to make the services accessible to patrons.

Even though, some librarians have administrative duties to perform, the fact that library patrons are not satisfied with the available services show that other members of staff such as library assistants and attendant do not have enough training for user-friendly services. Librarians should value satisfying the customer, and everyone should have a role to play in rendering maximum services. In essence, it is significant that this radical change should be motivated and oriented toward technological development as it is bound to enhance library perception and increase the level of patronage.

Application of marketing techniques is very useful in improving library's information services towards attaining users' satisfaction. It however, required that the library management focuses on the identification of users' needs rather than library needs. The present age is rightly

characterized as the age of information, where its success in any activity is based on the amount and accuracy of information available.

In this electronic age, the survival of a library depends among other things on its image in the minds of the users. This image should be the outcome of the quality and effectiveness of the services, the ability to anticipate the desires and requirements of actual and potential users and their fulfillment. Marketing is the instrument through which these library objectives can be fulfilled.

REFERENCES

- Adeloye, A. (2003). How to market yourself and your library organization: *A solo librarian's guide*. *Library Finances* 16(1): 15-18.
- American Marketing Association adopts new definition of marketing, Marketing News. Retrieved from <http://www.marketingpower.com/content/21257.php> accessed on April 31st, 2012.
- Block, J. (2002). Information marketing of free-based services in academic libraries in Sri Lanka. *MLIS dissertation submitted to Faculty of Sci & Inf. University of Malaya*
- Bushing, Mary C. (1995). The library's product and excellence. *Libr Trends* 43(3): 384-400. College of Medicine of the University of Lagos, *prospectus 2010/11 section*.
- Dimick, Barbara (1995). Marketing Youth Services. *Libr Trends* 43(3): 463-77.
- Gupta, Dineshi K. (2003). Marketing of library and information services: *building a new discipline for library and information science education in ASIA*. *Malaysian Jour Libr & Inf Sci* 8(2): 95-108.
- Gupta, D.K. and Jambhekar, A. (2002). What is marketing in libraries? *Concepts, orientations and practices* retrieved on 25/4/2012 from <http://fundarticles.com/p/articles>.
- Gupta, D.K. and Savard, R. (2010). Marketing library and information services. Retrieved 25/4/2012 from <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/ramp/html/r8801foo.htm>.
- Haliso Yacob (2012). *Competitive intelligence lecture note*.
- Kotler, P. (1997). *Marketing management analysis, planning, implementation and control*. New Jersey: Prentice hall, p. 28.
- Kotler, P. and Andreasen, A. (1991). *Strategic marketing for non-profit organization 6th ed*. Upper saddle River, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall.
- Munshi, M.N. (2008). *Marketing of information products and services for special libraries in Bangladesh. The proceeding of 6th convention PLANNER, Nagaland University, Nagaland. Nov. 6-7, 2008*.
- Popoola, S.O. (1998). Health information needs and services in Lagos. *Nig schl health Jour* 10(1 &2): 126-135.
- Powers, Janet E. (1995). Marketing in the special library environment. *Library trends* 43(3):78-93.
- Narayan, G.J. (1991). *Library and information management*. New Delhi: Prentice Hall.

- Renberg, G. (2000). Marketing library services: *How it all began*. Retrieved on 02/05/2012 from <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla63/63reng.htm>
- Renberg, G. (1997). Marketing library services. *How it all began in IFLA General Conference-63rd Conference Programme and Proceedings. August 31st – September 5th, 1997.*
- Renu, Verma (2010). Fundamental of librarianship. *Delhi: Global media*. Retrieved from <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/libinstitute/Doc?id=10417562&ppg=217>.
- Schmidt, Janine (2004). Unlocking the library: marketing library services: *A case study approach in the 21st century*. Retrieved on the May 7th, 2012 from <http://www.library.uq.edu.au/papers/unlockingthe-library.pdf>
- Shontz, M.L.; Parker, J.C. and Parker, R. (2004). What do librarians think about marketing? *A survey of public librarians' attitudes toward the marketing of library services*. *Libr Quart* 74(1): 63-84.