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Strategies and Challenges for Marketing Electronic Resources: A Cross-Sectional Study of The Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy

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Abstract

This study examined the strategies and challenges for marketing electronic resources at the Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy. It was conducted at Kivukoni Campus in Dar es Salaam region. Data were collected from 60 students and MNMA library staff using self-administered questionnaires and in depth interviews. The study established that the strategies used for marketing electronic resources were: notice boards, librarians, instructional website, orientation to new users, library home page, institutional newsletters, text messages, social networks, Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information as well as posters and brochures while the challenges for marketing of electronic resources to the library users were poor quality of internet services and network in the library, unreliable power supply, inadequate knowledge for marketing of e- resources, limited number of library staff, inadequate budget, absence of active library web site, poor morale by the librarians and poor cooperation from the management. Based on these findings, the study recommends allocation of funds for marketing the e- resources, training librarians, increasing number of ICT infrastructures, and improving the quality of the internet at the library could improve the marketing of e − resources to library users at MNMA. The study, also recommends that MNMA library staff should make use of the following marketing strategies notice boards; librarians, social networks, institutions website, student orientation and institutional newsletters in a bid to enhance visibility of e-resources available at MNMA library.

Keywords: *E-resources, Marketing e-resources, Marketing strategies, MNMA, Marketing challenges*

INTRODUCTION

With the development of information and communication technology most libraries are now providing information resources in both electronic and print formats which have increased their visibility to various information seekers. Manda and Mkhai (2015) found that the development of information and communication technology was expected to enhance the capacity of libraries to facilitate efficient and effective access to and use of electronic information resources through the internet. Furthermore, the study by Manda and Mkhai (2015) confirms Kumar (2008) who declared that electronic resources are becoming more and more important in academic communities and in view of this many academic libraries especially in developing countries are using millions of money for subscribing to e-resources or digitizing in-house to increase its visibility internal and external library users.

Most of the electronic resources such as CD-ROMs, the Internet, and the World Wide Web have provided a tremendous progress to the development of electronic publications of all types. In this environment where many electronic resources and online databases like Emerald Insight, Journal Storage, Education Resources Information Centres and Scopus are being invented, then marketing them cannot be an option in academic libraries. The fact that the electronic resources comprise the library's collection, then, users of academic libraries need to be aware of its availability (Adeniran & Onuoha, 2018). This can only be possible if librarian in academic libraries and the Academy's

management at large invest in effective marketing of electronic resources to ensure that they are visible to users.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted at The Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy library, Kivukoni Campus. The Academy has been renamed after Mwalimu Nyerere in honour and recognition of his contribution as the Father of the nation and the founder of Kivukoni College. The Academy is located at Kigamboni ward in Kigamboni district, Dar es Salaam (MNMA Prospectus, 2018/2019). The study employed mixed research design in which both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used in a single study to serve for mutual validation of data, findings and for the production of a more coherent and complete picture of the investigated domain (Kelle, 2006, Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009 and Mbwete, 2015). Quantitative and qualitative primary data generated from 50 students and 10 MNMA library staff were gathered through the use of questionnaire and in-depth interviews respectively. Bailey (2004) noted that a minimum sample size of 30 respondents is normally sufficient for studies in which statistical analysis is to be done. Quantitative data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 18 which enabled the researcher to derive tables, frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data, on the other hand were subjected to content analysis.

Literature Review

This section reviews literature related to this study. The review is twofold: the first part focuses on the awareness, low usage of e-resources and strategies for marketing e-resources whereas the second part reviews literature on challenges hindering utilization of electronic resources in academic libraries.

Awareness, low usage of e-resources and strategies for marketing e-resources

Studies indicate that there is a low usage of electronic resources in most academic libraries. For instance, Baayel & Asante (2019); Adeniran & Onuoha (2018); Ebijuwa (2018) and Msagati (2014) noted that, while electronic resources have become essential tools for learning, research, teaching and consultancy most of the scholars and researchers are not fully utilizing them. According to Akpojotor (2016) shows that the usage and awareness of electronic information resources is low and the major identified problem were lack of awareness campaign and poor information retrieval skills by the students. Furthermore, the survey by Ojo and Akande (2005) that involved 350 respondents from University College Hospital Ibadan examined the access, usage and awareness of electronic information resources. The findings revealed that the level of usage of electronic resources was not high. This may probably be due to poor and ineffective marketing strategies of electronic resources employed in academic libraries. The need to market electronic resources in academic libraries arises due to several reasons such as the amount of money spent by universities in subscribing these resources is very high while the number of customers who fully utilize these electronic resources is unknown. For instance the studies by Wanjiku Ndungu & Wacuka Gikandi (2018) and Yi (2018) indicates that marketing includes offering products which are of value to their clients group and the academic libraries have the responsibility of providing a wide range of resources to meet the needs of their users. For instance providing information for their assignment, researches and information for broadening their knowledge, this can only be successful if marketing of these information resources to the significant stakeholders is properly done.

The study by Pandurangaswamy and Kishore (2013) indicated that users do not have enough time to browse the pages of printed materials and this fact induces users to increase their use of e-resources to meet information needs. Thus, for fully utilization of e-resources in any information centers like academic libraries the e-resources available must be known by the key beneficiaries such as students, lecturers, librarians, researchers and this is only possible if there is effective marketing strategies. Furthermore, Zibani & Kalusopa (2019) suggested that in order for marketing of electronic resources in academic libraries to work, there is a need to develop a plan where the whole institution dedicates its efforts to meet the needs of clients. However, Pessa (2019) declared that libraries have done a great job of collecting e-resources, but have not done such a good job of marketing them aggressively and effectively to clients.

The study by Inyang & Josiah (2019) noted three aspects that are needed for academic libraries to successfully market their electronic resources for more users to have access to these e-resources: as promoting them, making them easy to find on the library website and providing seamless access to them. In academic libraries marketing of e-resources means determining the right product that grabs the attention of those to whom it is most useful. Marketing of electronic resources in academic libraries can be done successfully by employing various techniques such as bookmarking, newspaper, brochures and magnets, library website home page and modern social media such as WhatsApp, facebook, Twitter and Instagram (Kreft, 2019). Other strategies used to market the e-resources in academic libraries include posters, notices, telephone calls, current awareness services, workshops and seminars. Furthermore, understanding the disciplines taught at the university and courses offered by the university influences the utilization of electronic resources subscribed the library. However, Kim (2006) noted that that user's image of the library seems to be a more virtual one, indicating that libraries need to bring the advertisements to their users. This implies that libraries should work hard to ensure that library users are well informed on the available electronic resources by ensuring that every technique used to advertise them reach the intended stakeholders. Zibani & Kalusopa (2019) noted that information is generated, converted and stored in electronic form and require the users to have necessary skills in order to effectively utilize them. Furthermore, Zibani & Kalusopa (*Op. cit*) reported that availability of e-resources in academic libraries could be useless if they were not marketed effectively to users. Therefore, to ensure timely and greater utilization of electronic resources marketing is of greater importance.

Challenges hindering Utilization of Electronic Resources in Academic Libraries
Although, in recent years academic libraries have been investing in subscription of e-resources several studies still indicates that, there are challenges that hinder its effective utilization. According to Chisenga (2004) barriers to the effective utilization of electronic resources by academic libraries includes poor marketing of the available electronic resources, lack of adequate funding, poor internet connectivity and lack of consistent training for users in new ICT services. However, the study conducted Isibika & Kavishe (2018) on Utilization of subscribed electronic resources by library users in Mzumbe university library established that underutilization of electronic resources in academic libraries is a result of unstable network connectivity and lack of searching skills. This implies that librarians in academic libraries have to invest their efforts in conducting intensive training to equip all library clients with knowledge on how to access, retrieve and use the available library electronic resources.

Furthermore, Akussah, Asante & Adu-Sarkodee (2015) jointly conducted a study on the Impact of electronic resources and usage in academic libraries in Ghana. Akussah, Asante & Adu-Sarkodee found that effective use of electronic resources was constrained by factors such as insufficient number of computers, inadequate electricity supply, lack of information retrieval skills and hence making the level of use of e-resources by clients being very low. However, Kwadzo (2015) revealed that inadequate knowledge on the use of computers lead to poor use of electronic databases, lack of awareness on the availability of e-resources, lack of access to computers since there is a direct relationship between computer literacy and use of e-resource, insufficient training of new library users, and the high cost of marketing the available e-resources were barriers to utilization and marketing of e-resources by users of academic libraries. Therefore, marketing the available electronic resources could increase its utilization and make users aware of the types of electronic resources that are subscribed by the academic library.

Despite of several researches being carried out on marketing library resources still the effectiveness of the marketing strategies of e-resources in academic libraries for its full utilization have been insufficiently examined. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the strategies and challenges of marketing electronic resources with specific reference to The Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy Library.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
Characteristics of Respondents
This study comprised of 83.3% of the students studying at the Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy while 16.7% were the library staff working at the MNMA library. The study findings further showed that 4 (8%) of the students were aged below 20 years, 36 (72%) students were aged between 21-30 years, 7 (14%) students were aged between 31-40 years while only 3 (6%) students were aged between 41-50 years. On the other hand, findings showed that the majority 40 (80%) of the students were aware of the availability of electronic resources available at MNMA library while 10 (20%) of the students were not aware of the availability of electronic resources at MNMA library as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents characteristics

Distribution of Respondents (n=60)		
Respondents category	**F**	**%**
Students	50	83.3
Library Staff	10	16.7
Age of Students (n=50)		
Age range	**F**	**%**
Below 20 years	4	8
21- 30 years	36	72
31- 40 years	7	14
41- 50 years	3	6
Students Awareness of E-Resources (n=50)		
variables	**F**	**%**
Aware	40	80
Not aware	10	20

 F= Frequency   %=Percent

Age. Findings show that the majority (72%) of the respondents were aged between 21 and 30 years. This implies that the younger generations have a greater chance of utilizing the electronic resources available at the MNMA library. It was important to study age of respondents because studies have found that the more experience people have in using computers, the less worried they are about using it (Pandurangaswamy & Kishore, 2013) and hence since electronic resources are computer dependent it is imperative to understand the age of respondents who the beneficiaries of the library subscribed electronic resources. This finding is in line with Kim (2006) who declared that age is one variable that associates with use of computers and use of digital information resources.

Awareness. With reference to students' awareness on the availability of electronic information resources, the study revealed that the majority (80%) of the students at the Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy were aware of the availability of electronic resources. High level of awareness is probably due to the fact that librarians at the Academy are highly involved during the student's orientation period where students are well informed on the availability of electronic resources subscribed by the Academy's library but also involvement of respondents with formal education may also be a reason for this. The study by Msagati (2014) revealed that, lack of awareness is due to inadequate marketing skills and improper techniques employed by the information professionals which contribute to underutilization of electronic resources in academic libraries. The study findings show that active learners who participate more in class and who read, write and study more are active library users and probably they are more likely to be knowledgeable of the electronic resources available in the library

Strategies for Marketing Electronic Resources
In order to know the effective strategies used to market the e-resources in academic libraries, the respondents were asked to indicate the ways through which they mostly receive information on the availability of electronic resources in their academic library. Findings shows that 21 (42%) of the respondents knew of the existence of electronic resources through library home page, 29 (58%) through institution website, 15 (30%) through poster and brochures, 22 (44%) through institution newsletter, 28 (56) through orientation of new library users, 11 (22%) through CAS and SDI, 19 (38%) through text messages, 37 (74%) through librarians, 37 (74%) through notice boards while 29 (58%) through social network. As indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Marketing Strategies of Electronic Resources by Respondents

Variables	Responses			
	Yes		**No**	
	F	**(%)**	**F**	**(%)**
Through CAS and SDI	11	22	39	78
Poster and Brochures	15	30	35	70
Through Text Messages	19	38	31	62
Library Home page	21	42	29	58
Institution Newsletter	22	44	28	56
Orientation to new users	28	56	22	44
Institution website	29	58	21	42
Social Network	29	58	21	42
Librarians	37	74	13	26
Notice Boards	37	74	13	26

F=Frequency   (%) = Percent

Librarians and Notice Boards: findings in Table 2 show that the majority 74% of the students got information from the librarians and notice boards on new electronic resources available. Wanjiku Ndungu & Wacuka Gikandi (2018) noted that in developing countries where electricity is not reliable many institutions including academic libraries are still using notice boards as advertisement and marketing tool to send information to stakeholders. This implies that Librarians and notice boards are the major marketing strategies that play a vital role in marketing the electronic resources available in academic libraries.

Social Network: With reference to social networks, the study indicated that 58% of the students got information on electronic resources through this strategy. This implies that the role of social networks in disseminating information on new e-resources is very crucial. Similarly, Yi (2018) established similar findings whereby the use of social networks such as facebook, twitter, blogs and other online academic forums to market the electronic resources were revealed to be very significant. With regard to social network MNMA staff noted that: *currently the world has changed and people use social networks like twitter and facebook in marketing their products and within a few minutes the whole world becomes aware about the availability of such products*.

Institution website: With reference to Institution web site the findings indicate that 58% of the students got information on the availability of electronic resources from the institutions web sites. This is an indication that the importance of institutions' website in marketing and promoting the services and new products could not be ignored (Kreft, 2019). Some of the library staff from MNMA commented that: *"Website is a basic tool in marketing the library's new arrivals not only electronic resources but also the print resources"*

Orientation to New Users: Findings in Table 2 further indicated that 56% of the students knew the existence of electronic resources in the academic library during the orientation to new users. This implies that orientation to new users though it is a traditional method of providing education to users on the library usage it is still a powerful method that could enhance the marketing of e-resources when used properly. The findings from the interviewed library staff at MNMA indicated that: "*Library orientation is the fundamental tool in marketing the electronic resources available in the library*."

Institution Newsletter: With regard to Institution newsletter 44% of the students got information on the existence of electronic resources. This implies that if institutions publish or produce newsletter frequently they could be a valuable source of information to the library users and therefore market their electronic resources. Similarly, Kwadzo (2015) noted that in creating awareness to users of the library on what services are currently offered by a particular library usage of institutional newsletters and almanacs in very important.

Library Home Page: Findings in Table 2 show that 42% of the students got the knowledge of electronic resources availability by visiting the library's home pages. This implies that if library home pages are well designed could be used as a primary marketing tool of electronic resources in academic libraries. Furthermore, the interviewed library staff revealed that: *since most of the library users visit the Academy's website when seeking information about the Academy, it is important to find a space on the website home page where library resources could be marketed*.

Text Messages: Findings also show that 38% of the respondents got the knowledge of the existence of electronic resources through text messages. This implies that librarians could use this strategy

to inform users on what is new in their libraries. If this method is adopted by academic libraries to market their services is likely to enhance the number of electronic information resources users in their libraries (Nunoo, 2012).

Poster and Brochures: A finding shows that 30% of the students got the knowledge on the availability of electronic resources through posters and brochures. This implies that when properly used they could be used as important tools in informing the library stakeholders on the availability of electronic resources.

Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information (CAS & SDI):. Findings show that 22% of the students got information of e-resources through current awareness services and selective dissemination of information. This implies that libraries could also invest on Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information in order to market the electronic information resources they have in their libraries. Although CAS and SDI are traditional strategies in marketing library services they are still useful in informing library clients on new library resources including the availability of electronic resources (Kreft, 2019).

Types of Electronic Resources mostly known by the Students
The study findings showed that the majority 30 (60%) of the respondents were aware of the internet as an electronic resource, 9 (18%) of the respondents were aware of e-journals, 4 (8%) of the respondents were aware of e-books, 4 (8%) of the respondents were aware of e-newspaper while only 3 (6%) of the respondents were aware of the Online Access Public Catalogue as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: E-Resources mostly known by the Students

Electronic Resources	F	(%)
OPAC	3	6
E- news paper	4	8
e-books	4	8
e-journals	9	18
Internet	30	60
Total	**50**	**100**

 F=Frequency   **(%) = Percent**

Finding shows that the majority which is 60% are aware of internet as the type of electronic resource. This implies that most of the students at the area of study prefer the use of internet as compared to other types of electronic resources. This calls for libraries therefore, to invest much on the marketing of the least known electronic resources like OPAC, internet, e-newspapers, electronic journals and electronic books so that all could be known by the users. Findings of this study are in-line with those of Gagibayo, Ikoja and Okello (2013) who found that library clients were aware of internet as the type of electronic resources and therefore it was one of the resources highly used by the library clients in addressing various information needs they face.

Difficulties encountered in Marketing of Electronic Resources in Academic Libraries
Findings revealed that 38 (76%) of the respondents indicated that inadequate knowledge for marketing is the challenge in marketing e-resources, 38 (76%) indicated that unreliable power limits the use of e- resources, 37 (64%) shows that limited ICT infrastructure prevents the effective marketing of e- resources, 34 (64%) shows limited number of library staff as the challenge in marketing e-resources. The study findings further indicated that, 31 (62%) shows inadequate

budget, 31 (62%) shows absence of library website is the challenge in marketing the e-resources, 28 (56%) of the respondents did not know the challenges affecting the e-resources marketing, 25 (50%) shows that poor morale by the librarians challenges the marketing of e-resources. Not only but also 20 (40%) of the respondents indicated that poor cooperation from the management is the challenge for marketing e-resources and 40(80%) of the respondents indicated that poor quality of internet services and network in the library hinder the marketing of e- resources. As indicated in Table 4

Table 4: Barriers for marketing the e-resources in the Library

Variables	Responses			
	Yes		No	
	F	(%)	F	(%)
Poor cooperation from the management	20	40	30	60
Poor morale by the librarians	25	50	25	50
Inadequate budget	31	62	19	38
Absence of active library website	31	62	19	38
Limited number of library staff	34	68	16	32
Limited ICT infrastructure prevents the effective marketing of e- resources	37	74	13	26
Inadequate knowledge for marketing	38	76	12	24
Unreliable power limits the use of e- resources	38	76	12	24
Poor quality of internet services and network in the library	40	80	10	20

F=Frequency   **(%) = Percent**

Poor quality of internet services and network in the library: Findings of this study show that one of the critical challenges that academic libraries face in marketing and promoting its electronic resources to library clients is the poor quality of internet services and network in the library. This implies that academic libraries need to ensure that internet services and network are of good quality in order to effectively market and promote its electronic resources to the clients**.** The interviewed library staff commented that**:** *"Poor quality of internet services and network in their library is a most challenging barrier towards effective marketing and promotion of e-resources and eventually affects its utilization by the library users".*

Unreliable electrical power supply limits the use of electronic resources: The study also revealed that unreliable electrical power affects students in promoting electronic resources for high percent 76%. This implies that academic libraries need to have alternative source of power that will enhance the marketing of e-resources in academic libraries. The findings of this study are in line with those of Nunoo (2012) who noted that recurrent power outage is a major challenge that faces the marketing of electronic resources in developing countries. Furthermore, the study findings support the findings of Oyedapo and Ojo (2013) who declared that frequent power outage is a problem hindering the use and marketing of e-resources in most academic libraries in developing countries. Findings from the interviewed library staff at MNMNA said: *"The most challenging factor for the marketing of electronic resources is the unreliability of the electricity at MNMA and Kigamboni district in general".*

Inadequate knowledge for marketing electronic resources: The knowledge of marketing is important for informing people what you have in your library. The study findings indicated that the information professionals at MNNA had inadequate knowledge for marketing the electronic

resources in their academic library. Currently the marketing strategies have adopted the use of advanced techniques and strategies such as online marketing, email marketing, augmented marketing, Content marketing, Social media marketing, Direct mail marketing and cloud marketing which the librarians at MNMA library have little knowledge on them.

Limited ICT infrastructure prevents the effective marketing of electronic resources: The study findings revealed that limited ICT infrastructure was a barrier to effective marketing of the electronic resources in academic libraries. The findings aligns with Ojo (2013) position that Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure such as computer and internet facilities play an important role in marketing the electronic resources. This implies that academic libraries need to have adequate ICT infrastructure in order to effectively market the electronic resources they have in their collection and other electronic repositories. *Findings from the interviewed library staff indicated that, the library has very few computers connected with the internet and therefore, library officers have to share the few resources with the student. This has been a challenge to those staff who are to upload information on the internet to inform the users on what is new in the library.*

Limited number of library staff: Librarians as information professionals are responsible for marketing the electronic resources available in their libraries. Findings from this study show that 68% of the respondents mentioned that limited number of library staff was a challenge that affected much the marketing and promotion process of the electronic resources available at MNMA library. This implies that limited number of library staff was a barrier to the marketing of e-resources in academic libraries. Therefore, academic libraries need to ensure that the number of librarians is large enough so that others could be assigned the activity of marketing and promoting e-resources to the library users and other stakeholders.

Absence of active library website: The findings of this study also revealed that, absence of active library website affects the marketing of electronic resources for 62%. This implies that academic libraries should ensure that they design good websites as they are potential tools in marketing and increasing the visibility of library electronic resources. Afolabi (2007) confirms that lack of library's website have a greater impact in academic libraries as they are used in marketing of library resources to its clients but also informs the general public on the availability of new electronic resources.

Inadequate budget: The budget for marketing the electronic resources was indicated to be a barrier for marketing library electronic resources in academic libraries. This implies that libraries need to increase the budget for the academic libraries to ensure that the electronic resources are marketed to the library clients. Afolabi (2007) asserted that it is the cost that affects the effective marketing of electronic resources to users in most of the academic libraries. Chisenga (2004) also noted that inadequate budget in most of the academic libraries challenges the marketing of electronic resources. Findings from the interviewed staff from MNMA library indicated that:
"Lack of enough funds for purchasing various stationery and other requirements in the library was a critical problem hindering effective marketing of electronic resources despite the budget prepared every financial year by the library department".

Poor morale by the librarians: Librarians in academic libraries were reported to be a challenge or barrier in marketing the e-resources. Findings in this study revealed that poor morale by the librarians affected the marketing of electronic resources in academic libraries. This implies that

for the librarians to market the electronic resources properly need to have morale. The librarians' morale could be raised by giving them appreciating their work and by giving them moral and financial support.

Poor cooperation from the management: The institutional management where the academic libraries belong play a big role in ensuring the prosperity of academic libraries. If the management is in harmony with the libraries they are likely to pay much attention to the libraries and vice versa. This implies that good relations between the academic libraries and the management is very significant for the proper running of library services including the marketing of electronic resources. The study by Ojo (2013) reported that among the major challenges that libraries face in marketing and promoting of electronic resources is the lack of cooperation between librarians and the institutional management.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Conclusions
The study concludes that the best strategies to be adopted for effective marketing of electronic resources include: notice boards, librarians, social network, institution web site and orientation to new users. The proper use of these strategies in marketing the electronic resources has a potential for enhancing the utilization of electronic resources among the clients in academic libraries.
With regard to the challenges in marketing of electronic resources in academic libraries the study concludes that; inadequate knowledge for marketing, unreliable power, limited ICT infrastructure, limited number of library staff, poor cooperation from the management, poor quality of internet services and network in the library, inadequate budget, poor morale by librarians and absence of library website largely affect the marketing of e-resources. These challenges affect the marketing of electronic resources and hence utilization of the electronic resources in academic libraries.

Recommendations
The study recommends that, those responsible for marketing electronic resources at the MNMA should adopt the use of marketing strategies that seem to perform well in the marketing practices like notice boards; librarians, social networks, institutions website, student orientation and the use of institution newsletters. Also the study suggests that the MNMA should attempt the use of other means like student organizations, influential students' leaders, class representatives and students meetings which are likely to increase the student's level of awareness. With regard to the challenges hindering the effectiveness of marketing electronic resources, the study calls for joint efforts between management, librarians and other stakeholders in order to improve the marketing practices of electronic resources at the Academy. Furthermore, the study suggests that all critical challenges such lack of training to librarians, unreliable electricity, and inadequate number of librarians be addressed in order to improve the marketing of electronic resources at MNMA.

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