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# Lobbying And Advocacy as Marketing Strategies For Library Survival in Nigeria

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# **LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY AS MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR LIBRARY SURVIVAL IN NIGERIA.**

**BY**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*Library is meant to be keenly involved in social, economic, cultural and lifelong learning of the people. It is the only institution that offers free access to knowledge to both high and the lowly citizens. Yet it is not accorded high priority in planning and development by governing institutions. Libraries have always had to justify their existence to sponsor as they are not considered as 'essential' as compared to sectors like health, education, roads, etc. It is now time for librarians to rethink what library is all about, what is needed, what will be used and what is sustainable in our environment. It is time other people outside the profession be reminded of the relevance of libraries for National development. Perhaps that is why the National Federation of Women's Institute (NFWI) announced a joint lobby of parliament calling on politicians to protect vital library services. Librarians' voices must become audible in convincing everyone including the grassroots, legislators and leaders at all levels on the need to let libraries exist positively. This research assignment gives an insight into lobbying and advocacy as marketing strategies for libraries survival in Nigeria. The paper discussed the various key concepts that are associated with the topic as well as the importance of lobbying and advocacy in Nigerian libraries. The paper also looked at the techniques used by librarians for lobbying and advocating in libraries as well as the challenges affecting lobbying and advocacy in libraries. The paper was concluded with recommendations such as Improvement in leadership of libraries and information centre; there is need for leadership of libraries to improve their leadership styles by using their salient position to project the image of the library*

*when this is done; they would have succeeded in paving the way for easy lobbying and advocacy. Good rapport between Heads of libraries and policy makers: various heads of libraries should ensure they maintain good relationship with policy makers in their institution, good relationship between both parties can also pave way for successful lobbying and advocacy among others.*

**Keywords: Lobbying, Advocacy, Marketing, Marketing Strategies, Library.**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

In contemporary Nigeria society in which library and information service is not at the forefront of government activities, the subject matter of lobbying and advocacy could be seen to be very pertinent to the information world. It is assumed that education is the key to economic development of any society, if education is the bedrock of any society suffice it to state that librarianship is a hub upon which every educational activity rotates on. However, it is disheartening to note that in most developed countries, in an attempt to enhance the educational system, more often than not, libraries in our educational institutions are neglected in the scheme of things. Libraries are inadequately funded, most heads of institution have poor perception of library especially for the fact that it is not income generating avenue (IGA) for the Institutions. This above reasons among others underpinned the necessity of the subject matter of lobbying and advocacy in library and information services (Osuchukwu, Anyadiegwu, Nzewi & Eneh, 2015).

However, depending on the context under which the term lobbying and advocacy is used, they may mean different things to different people from different background. Lobbying and advocacy is a process of influencing what other people feel, think and believe so that changes can happen the way the influencer want them to happen. Lobbying and advocacy can be seen as communications processes.

Marketing offers both a theory and a process by which libraries can link products, results, and roles. Marketing can assist libraries in determining their future and in identifying quality products, services, programs, and materials. A marketing audit and the resulting plan can contribute to a library's ability to find a niche in the present as well as in the future and to fill that niche by an optimal allocation of resources. A marketing orientation can assist libraries in defining their role and in guaranteeing their future (Kotler, 2006). Marketing provides a theoretical framework within which to address the specific library and information science questions facing public, school, special, and academic libraries in both the public and private sectors. What the library will look like and what it will offer as products can be determined through the use of modern marketing theory and practice.

Lobbying as noted by Berg (2007) is an accepted and legal process that allows the voice of citizen groups, association, labour union, corporations and others to be heard in the political arena. Lobbying is the practice of convincing a person or group of people to make decisions that you want them to make (Myenzi, 2008). In librarianship, lobbying can be considered as those activities aimed at convincing or attempting to influence a legislative through oral \ written communication or direct interventions with key policy, decision makers. Edgett cited in Berg (2009) defines lobbying as ‘the act of publicly representing an individual organization, or idea with the object of persuading targeted audiences to look favourably on or accept the point of view of the individual, the organization, or the idea.

Lobbying is the art of influencing and informing an elected officer, or the government on behalf of your special interest. It is worthy to assert here that lobbying as a process is targeted at decision makers as it is seen as a systematic informal effort to influence decision makers (Anyanwu, Obichere & Ossaih-onah, 2013).

Advocacy on the other hand embraces a much broader framework and purpose than lobbying (Gitachu, 2008). Advocacy is the active support of an idea or caused expressed through strategies and methods’ that influence the opinions and decision of people and organization (Buckley, 2009). Lobbying and advocacy are processes of influencing what other people feel, think and believe so that changes can happen the way the influencers want them to happen. Based on the above backdrop, this research paper is intended to discuss lobbying and advocacy as marketing strategies for libraries survival in Nigeria.

#### **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS:**

**LOBBYING:** Lobbying includes all attempts to influence legislators, constituents or organised groups (Wikipedia cited in Ochogwu, 2015). Similarly, Myenzi (2008) conceptualize lobbying as the practice of convincing a person or groups of people to make decisions that you want them to make. Lobbying in his view is not confined within the policy circles only as it can also mean strong persuasion or a person or group of people in society to support an idea that will eventually bring change in attitude or behaviour patterns of the community.

**ADVOCACY:** Advocacy is defined as the pursuit of influencing outcomes including public policy and resource allocations within political, economic and social systems and institutions that directly affect people's lives (Wikipedia in Ochogwu, 2015). However, advocacy according Gitachu (2008) is a set of targeted actions directed at decision makes in support of a specific policy issue. In other words, advocacy are specific actions executed I order to gain support in policy issues. No wonder Myenzi (2008) sees it as an action oriented art of persuasion to bring about change in policies, recourses allocations, service delivery and or behaviour that affect the public of a particular society. Looking at it from the librarianship point of view, Mlanga (n. d) defined advocacy as a sustained effort by librarians and lobbying association to keep libraries and the work they do in the minds of the people who make decisions that affects libraries.

**MARKETING:** Marketing is a stance and an attitude that focuses on meeting the needs of users. Marketing is a means of ensuring that libraries, librarians, and librarianship are integrated into both today's and tomorrow's emerging global culture. Philip Kotler, the marketing guru, calls marketing a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and exchanging products of value with others. In the context of library, Shontz, Parker, and Parker (2004) defined marketing as a purposeful group of activities which foster constructive and responsive interchange between the providers of library and information services and their actual and potential users. Marketing is also refers to as those instruments through which information (both raw and processed) are transmitted to its users.

**LIBRARY:** A library is a social and service institution providing information to its members. Its traditional functions include selection, acquisition, storage, processing, circulation, and reference. Over a period of time, due to change in the nature of demands by the clients, libraries have expanded their functions to include documentation and document delivery systems.

**STRATEGY:** Strategy is defined as a process of planning something or carrying out a plan in a skilful way. It can also be viewed as a plan that is intended to achieve a particular purpose.

## **IMPORTANCE OF LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY IN LIBRARIES:**

Beneficially, advocacy can be a tool for improving service delivery (Mynezi, 2008). In other words it helps to give voice to citizen's interest. In the same vein, Sloot and Gaanderse (2010) contends that both lobbying and advocacy increases the scope of influence to improve policies and achieve structural change in their areas. Mlanga (n. d) opined that the reason for advocacy and lobbying is that things are not going well in the library sector, to him, while libraries are integral units in country's welfare infrastructure, they are not immune to having their findings or programs jeopardized by changing political environments. Geherels (2003) gave some thought on the role and characteristics of a lobbyist to include: Informer, strategy planner, initiator, stimulator and pain in the neck. Characteristically he opined that a lobbyist should be communicative, social, knows about decision making process, knows elementary facts, analytical, networker, sympathetic, and knows what moves other people patient and open minded. Ochogwu (2015) highlights the importance of lobbying and advocacy for effective library and information service delivery to include: to influence decision makers in supporting library related projects, lobbying and advocacy help to show the importance of libraries and information centres in the development of any human endeavour such as health, education, agriculture, sports, engineering etc., they assist in the demonstration of the importance of formulating library and information policies to achieve positive structural changes in any establishment and also, they help to increase awareness of the importance of library and information services among communities for self-development.

## **LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY AS MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR LIBRARY SURVIVAL IN NIGERIA.**

The call to be involved in public awareness campaign initiative in promoting the values of libraries and librarians was started in 2001 by American Library Association (ALA, 2014). The campaign was for all types of libraries which led to the creation of a website: "@yourlibrary.com" where programming ideas, sample press materials, downloadable artwork, tips and suggestions are made free and designed to be customized by any library to conduct their own public relations. This has revealed the importance of being involved and the willingness to represent our libraries, hence, the call for capacity building. Many online resources also abound for learning techniques of lobbying and advocacy. International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) (2012) recommended some websites on advocacy. It recommended that advocacy toolkit by American Association of School Librarians, Advocacy resource centre of the American Library Association, Advocacy and lobbying Workshop of

Book aid International and a brochure devoted to advocacy of school libraries are good resources for training. ALA also has an office for library advocacy that supports the efforts of advocates seeking to improve libraries of all types by developing resources, a peer-to-peer advocacy network and training for advocates at the local, state and national levels (ALA, 2014).

Thus, efficient lobbyists and advocates can be made out of librarians. According to Cooper (2014), lobbyists come from all walks of life, possessing strong communication skills and knowledge of the legislative process as well as the organization or industry they represent. The learning and training help build the capacity and professionalism of the sector. This is where steps for lobbying and basics of advocacy are stepped down. In support Vidotto (2014) explained that individuals can also lobby as an act of volunteering or as a small part of their normal job. Example, a librarian can meet with a representative about an issue important to librarianship. The capacity building is directed towards acquiring skills on how to relate with major stakeholders, power holders in the community and civil society organizations (Mlanga, 2014). These are assessed with identifying specific goals, appropriate target, methods to employ and the particular people or person to take specific actions. This is all about persuasion, knowing the system as well as being familiar with the individuals involved in the process (AGT, 2014). Training embraces the principle of effective lobbying which include, accuracy, brevity, clear, knowing your opinion, seeing it their own way, follow-up, sending a thank you note, recognizing and appreciating any effort made.

Research has shown that many professionals, business owners, groups of constituents, individuals, commercial organizations, civil organizations, etc. employ various methods of lobbying and advocacy in influencing the opinions of the law makers. Example is the report of a well-known school librarian Laura Bush, ex-First Lady of USA who has a Master's degree in Library science and worked as a public school teacher and librarian in Houston. She organized a White House Conference on School Libraries advocating the need of supporting different library systems (The Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries, 2002). Indeed, everything goes into lobbying and advocacy – research, planning and strategy. Letters can be written to inform legislators expressing the views of the support required from them towards the libraries, sending emails, telephoning and sending delegates/face to face contacts with government officials (WLA, 2014). Studies have also revealed other ways of lobbying without contacting legislators directly. These are; talking with reporter and editors about the issue that needed addressing, participating in radio call-in shows, distributing action flyers in public meetings and other strategic points, reach out to other organizations to enlist their support in grassroots

lobbying. Evidences of library development and services in Nigeria have been reported to have declined dramatically over the past ten years, reflecting the economic situation of the country (Issak, 2000). Budget for library development and services have been known to become tighter. The study by Ileri (2014) on lobbying and fundraising strategies for libraries in Kenya has identified infrastructure, funding, reading culture, capacity building, current data base, legal frameworks and library development as areas that need lobbying for greater services. Furthermore, Mlaga (2014) informed that establishment of libraries, determining portion in ministerial budget, board representation, depository rules, resource sharing rules, salaries, etc. all have roots in legislation. Therefore, libraries need to penetrate the political scene and meet with decision makers on the importance of library systems in the society.

Technically, different techniques can be applied to lobbying and advocacy, but Myenzi (2008) identified the following as techniques for effective lobbying and advocacy which include publication of popular information and promotional education such as magazines, newsletters, posters, pamphlets, information sheet and banners, testimonies from victims of the particular problem, inviting key government officials to officiate and or attend functions organized by advocacy groups, indoor consultation forums, use of open forums and outreach programmes, use of corner system amongst others. Concluding in the words of Slood and Ganders (2010) effective lobbying and advocacy requires strategizing. According to Anyanwu, Obichere and Ossaih-Onah (2013) Face to face meeting with policy makers, using of insiders working with policy makers / legislators, use of personal letters are the most popular techniques used in lobbying and advocacy in libraries in Nigeria.

#### **CHALLENGES THAT AFFECT LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY:**

Conversely, challenges to lobby and advocacy have been identified. Many libraries have suffered either from lack of advocacy or lack of support. Mlaga (2014) noted that community can control the timing of its advocacy work and the amount of dissent that is made public to the people. Others are expenses involved in the communication and public relations of lobbying and advocacy, changes in government, lack of trained librarians in lobbying and advocacy as well as apolitical nature of librarians. Disturbing issues are the ethics and morality of lobbying which suggest that lobbyists employ questionable tactics to win legislation for special interests, thereby labelling them with sinister images. On the contrary, this image is considered unjust declaring that lobbyists perform legitimate and necessary function by presenting diverse social viewpoints and technical skills to help frame legislation. Limited access to legislators /policy makers, lukewarm attitude of librarians, lack of librarians in politics and leadership problems

were identified as factors affecting effective lobbying and advocacy in libraries (Anyanwu, Obichere & Ossaih-onah, 2013).

### **CONCLUSION:**

The importance of libraries in providing access to learning and as a vital lifeline in the society cannot be over emphasized. Librarians have always wanted the best for their clients but the reality behind political decisions-making processes have made libraries and librarians to be invisible. Therefore, the new image of librarianship can only be achieved if lobbying and advocacy activities are taken up. It is time the voices of librarians are heard and the law makers acknowledge the importance of library services. We may not always have our ways but advocacy and lobbying never stop. With capacity building, losses will be accepted well naturedly with the mind-set that political atmosphere changes in that a new legislator may support what the previous legislator refused to acknowledge.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

The following recommendations are made:

1. Improvement in leadership of libraries and information centre: there is need for leadership of libraries to improve their leadership styles by using their salient position to project the image of the library when this is done; they would have succeeded in paving the way for easy lobbying and advocacy.
2. Good rapport between heads of libraries and policy makers: various heads of libraries should ensure they maintain good relationship with policy makers in their institution, good relationship between both parties can also pave way for successful lobbying and advocacy.
3. Change of attitude among librarians: librarians should change their attitude towards library services. We should embrace the fact that we as librarians are of noble profession because you cannot lobby and advocate effectively in an environment where you display poor images of yourself and the library profession. When librarians change their attitude, the society at large will change their perception of librarians and library services.
4. All State Chapters of the Nigerian Library Association should organize special events in their states inviting library supporters to meet and speak with state legislators.

5. Nigerian Library Association should seriously chart the modules of capacity building and engage all sectors of libraries in articulating the areas that need immediate lobbying and advocacy and the best strategy to adopt.

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