

## MARKETING LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

This study was designed to investigate the marketing of library services in academic libraries in Niger state, Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of seventy one academic librarians which were used for the study. Three research questions guided the study. Thirty four items questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The data were analyzed with the use of frequency tables and mean score. The results of data analyzed revealed that the need for marketing library services is to achieve the objectives of the library and enlighten the users on the relevance of library use. The most widely used technique is exhibitions and display of new materials and staff friendliness to users. Furthermore, the findings of the study revealed that lack of funds, lack of facilities to market library services and librarians not willing to market library services are factors militating against marketing library services. Based on the findings it was recommended that more funds should be allocated to the development of libraries by parent organizations. Trainings, workshops, seminars should be organized for librarians to enlighten them on how to market library services. It is also very necessary for librarians to be committed to their work and improve their services.

**Key Words:** Marketing, Library, Information, Service, Academic

### Introduction

Libraries are the knowledge and information foundation of any nation. A library collects, Organizes and makes information resources accessible to all kinds of users regardless of their ages, background and interests. There are different kinds of libraries and each performs different kinds of functions to meet the determined purpose and needs of the people they serve (Ode and Omokoro 2007). These libraries include the following: academic libraries, public

libraries, special libraries, school libraries and private libraries.

Uwaifo(2010) stated that academic libraries are the ones established and maintained by higher institutions of learning such as universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, schools of nursing, petroleum training institutes and schools of health technology. The purpose of establishing an academic library is to enable it support the curriculum of the tertiary institutions which established it. They are essential part of the learning

community. The following are the services provided by an academic library: Circulation of materials, Shelf management, User education programmes, Provision of information services, Operation of the online public access catalog (OPAC), Exhibitions and displays, Readers enquiry services, Selective dissemination of information(SDI), Abstracting services, Access to electronic resources and document delivery services. the provision of excellent services to its users.

The effectiveness and efficiency of services provided by an academic library are mainly determined by library users. No library can exist without the patrons. The entire human and materials resources in a library are put in place at considerable expense for the overall purpose of providing effective services to the library users. On its part the library has a responsibility to ensure that its resources are used. (Edoka, 2000). The user is regarded as the most logical source to determine whether the library is playing its role satisfactory or not. The mission statement of any academic library should be

However, academic libraries are faced with the need to market their services to users. Libraries are no longer the only information providers. They now have to compete for customers with the internet, bookshops, online book dealers and demand for more efficient services and needs of users. Academic libraries must understand client needs, plan service provision, promote the available services and deliver them efficiently and effectively. To achieve this marketing is the essential tool.

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The importance of marketing library and information services cannot be overemphasized. The existence of libraries is being challenged. This is because access to information is now fast and relies on technology. Users now prefer to turn to the internet to source for information than

coming to the library. Libraries must redesign their services to cope with the era of information technology. Libraries must change from the traditional to digital method of providing information to users.

Users are not aware of the services available in libraries. Libraries have failed to provide the required information to users. Services provided are not user-oriented. These have resulted to non-utilization or under-utilization of services available in the library. The consequences of these are enormous. It results to users not able to locate, access and recognize their information needs. This can also result to low quality of teaching, learning and research activities in our higher institutions of learning. As a result they are unable to meet up with development in the global society. These services when utilized will help them in their careers and also make them life-long learners. It therefore, becomes necessary to examine the effective and efficient ways to market library services in academic libraries.

#### Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To determine the need for marketing library services in academic libraries in Niger state.
- To determine current techniques employed by academic libraries in marketing of library services in Niger state.
- To determine problems militating against marketing of library services in Niger state.

## Literature Review

Several authors have defined marketing library services in various ways. Ravichandran and Babu (2008) defines marketing in library and information services as the process of planning, pricing, promotion and distributing library products to create exchanges that satisfy the library and the customer. While Weigard (1995) views marketing library and information services as a process of exchange and a way to foster the partnership between the library and the community. It is important to identify the needs of users and strive to meet their needs effectively and efficiently. Marketing is an on-going process in the sense that it does not stop simply at providing or promoting services. It involves continuous assessment and re-assessment of users needs. Irving (1992) looked to the market place for new insights into marketing library services. He discovered that what succeeds in the market place fulfils criteria relating to convenience, ease of use, perception of balance between cost and value, choice, something new, or novel ways of doing existing tasks. If these criteria are applied in the libraries, libraries will continuously provide the best services to users always at the right time and place.

The aim of marketing library services is to provide information to users at the right time and place. Basanta and Sanjay (2008) stated that a user ascertains the effectiveness and efficiency of a library not based on how large the library is or the number of staff and information materials available, but on the services provided and how such services satisfy the information needs of users.

The importance of marketing in libraries by Steadley and Gray (2003) include the following:

- To compete favorably for customers with other information providers.
- To increase library fund.

- To convey what is unique about the access and service they provide.
- To promote librarians as well-trained technologically information experts.
- To create an environment in libraries that fosters customer consciousness among librarians.
- To increase usage of service.

Adeogun (2004) noted that libraries have to rethink its services and they should provide more flexible and user-centered service. These services should provide easy, convenient, rapid and increased access to valuable information resources that are boundless, virtual, multi-media as well as timeless to meet the information needs of users effectively and efficiently.

In a nutshell, information explosion, technology revolution and escalating costs are responsible for encouraging the library profession to develop marketing strategies in its operations and services. In order to effectively market library services, libraries must provide services that are convenient, accessible and meet the information needs of users effectively and efficiently.

## Research Methodology and Data Collection Procedure

The study was carried out using descriptive survey. The choice of descriptive survey is because the study investigated marketing library services in academic libraries in Niger state. It involves collecting data and answering questions on the views and opinions of librarians on marketing library services and reports the way things are.

## Population of the study

The population of the study comprised all librarians in academic libraries in Niger state. There are a total of 71 librarians and 12 academic libraries in Niger state.

### Sample and Sampling Techniques

It is apparent that the population of this study is not large therefore all the seventy-one librarians in academic libraries in Niger state were studied.

### Research Instrument

The research instrument adopted for data collection was questionnaire. It has 34 items which was organized under 3 sections (1-3). Section 1 with 9 items sought information on the need for marketing library services. Section 2 with

16 items inquired into the techniques in marketing of library services. While section 3 with 9 items sought for information on problems militating against marketing of library services.

### Findings

The data is presented and analyzed using frequency tables and mean. A total of 71 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents. Only 59 copies were returned and correctly filled. A mean score of 2.5 was used as a bench mark.

**Table 1: Librarians' Responses on the Need for Marketing Library Services**

S/N	Need for Marketing Library Services	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean X	Decision
1	To achieve the objectives of the library.	43	16	-	-	3.73	A
2	To enlighten the users on the relevance of library use.	32	25	2	-	3.50	A
3	To help users develop skills in order to acquire information from other sources.	27	30	2	-	3.42	A
4	To achieve high level of customer satisfaction.	27	29	3	-	3.41	A
5	To identify the information needs of users.	30	24	4	1	3.41	A
6	To compete favorably with other information providers.	28	25	6	-	3.40	A
7	To improve interpersonal relationship between librarians and users.	21	32	6	-	3.30	A
8	To attract donors and funding bodies to the library.	20	32	6	1	3.20	A
9	To provide conducive environment for users to study and work.	18	32	7	2	3.12	A

Table 1 shows the responses of the respondents on the need for marketing library services in Niger state. They rated two of the items as the major reasons to market library services. These are to achieve the objectives of the library (3.73) and to enlighten the users on the relevance of library use (3.50). Other items that were rated as the need for marketing library services includes: to achieve a high level of customer satisfaction, to identify the information needs of users, to help users

develop skills in order to acquire information from various sources, to compete favorably with other information providers, to improve interpersonal relationship between librarians and users, to provide conducive environment for users to study and work and to attract donors and funding bodies to the library. However, the lowest total mean was 3.12 which is to provide conducive environment for users to study and work.

**Table 2: Librarians' Responses on the current Techniques employed in Marketing of library Services in Academic Libraries in Niger state.**

S/N	Techniques in Library Marketing Services	Great Extent	Medium Extent	Little Extent	Not Available	Mean - X	Decision
10	Exhibitions and display of new arrivals.	19	28	9	3	3.10	A
11	Staff friendliness to users.	13	32	13	1	3.00	A
12	Increase interpersonal relationship between staff and users.	13	30	14	2	2.92	A
13	Librarians should be properly dressed.	13	32	10	4	2.91	A
14	Organizing user education.	12	20	22	5	2.70	A
15	Having representative in institutional functions.	23	3	23	10	2.70	A
16	Requesting for contributions from users while making Acquisitions.	19	8	22	10	2.61	A
17	Provision of electronic access to information.	5	25	22	7	2.50	A
18	One on one discussion with users.	3	15	32	9	2.20	R
19	Provision of suggestion boxes.	5	20	16	18	2.20	R
20	Advertizing in print and electronic media.	4	11	18	26	1.90	R
21	Organizing library week.	3	13	17	26	1.90	R
22	Creating a library web page.	2	14	20	23	1.81	R
23	Use of leaflets and posters.	2	9	20	28	1.75	R
24	Sending personal letters to users through e-mail and text messages.	-	15	11	-	1.70	R
25	Sending out brochure or flyers.	2	2	22	33	1.54	R

Table 3: Librarians Responses on the Problems Militating Against Marketing Library Services

S/N	Problems Militating Against Marketing Library Services	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean - X	Decision
26	In-adequate fund.	30	24	5	-	3.42	A
27	Lack of facilities to market library services.	23	29	7	-	3.30	A
28	Lack of effective communication between librarians and users.	21	33	5	-	3.30	A
29	Lack of training in marketing.	19	28	12	-	3.12	A
30	Management does not have marketing policy.	16	34	8	1	3.10	A
31	Poor access to information technology.	15	36	7	1	3.10	A
32	Lack of media access to marketing of academic library services.	15	31	13	-	3.03	A
33	Library management does not understand the concept of marketing.	15	28	15	1	3.00	A
34	Librarians do not know how to market library services.	6	22	28	3	2.53	A

From table 3, respondents were asked to indicate from the pre-selected problems the ones that militate against marketing library services in their libraries. Many of the respondents indicated lack of fund (3.42) as the major problem militating against marketing library services. Lack of fund as a problem, was closely followed by lack of effective communication between librarians and users (3.30) and lack of facilities to market library services. Also, from the results presented from the table several respondents also indicated that management does not understand the concept of marketing, poor access to information technology, lack of training in marketing, management does not have marketing policy and lack of media access to marketing library services were all included among the problems. The least item rated by the respondents as an impediment to marketing academic library

services was that librarians do not know how to market library services (2.53).

## DISCUSSION

From the findings of this research, it has been discovered that the need for marketing library services is viewed by librarians as an instrument to achieve the objectives of the library. This item has the highest mean rating. This finding is in tune with Dhiman and Sharma (2009) who observed that marketing is essential because it is an instrument through which library objectives can be fulfilled. The integration of marketing into library services is important because it reinforces and reiterates the basic values and beliefs of the profession in the changing environment.

Also, as indicated on the responses concerning techniques used by librarians in marketing library services exhibitions

and display of materials was rated high. This was also followed by staff friendliness to users. Also, Olalokun and Zaid (2006) asserted that exhibitions of library materials to users are a powerful means of advertising the services and educational values of the institution in general and the library in particular. When information materials are displayed attention can be drawn to new arrivals, special collections, reserve materials and services that are offered within the library that often go unnoticed.

The study further revealed that that several factors were militating against marketing library services. However, the factors with highest mean rating are inadequate fund, lack of effective communication between librarians and users and lack of facilities to market library services. Majority of the respondents indicated that inadequate fund is a serious factor affecting marketing of library services. The populations of students keep increasing, new courses are always introduced and curriculum keeps on changing. The fund given to academic libraries are not commensurate with rapid growth and new developments in institutions. This finding agrees with that of Abid (1992) who said that libraries in developing countries lack sufficient funds to subscribe to information resources. Most libraries in developing nations remain libraries only in name and are unable to perform their vital role which is

that of providing ready access to information and knowledge.

#### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

- More funds should be allocated to the development of libraries by parent organization.
- Facilities that are needed for effective marketing of library services should be provided to librarians.
- Minimum standard should be set by National Library Association for libraries in Nigeria.
- Librarians should be more committed to their work and introduce new techniques to market their library services.

#### Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn. It was the opinion of librarians that marketing library services is necessary in order to achieve the objectives of the library. The marketing techniques mostly used by librarians in marketing library services are exhibitions and display of new materials and staff friendliness to users.

Furthermore, the three greatest problems militating against marketing library services are lack of fund, lack of facilities to market library services and lack of effective communication between librarians and users.

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