

Influence of Librarian's Attitudes on the Marketing of Information Resources and Services in University Libraries in North Central Zone Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of librarian's attitudes on the marketing of information resources and services in university libraries in North Central states of Nigeria. Under the current dispensation where libraries, especially university libraries are competing for patronage of users who have found other platforms to satisfy their information need, it has become imperative for librarians to employ marketing strategies, tactics and tools to continue to have a bite of the pie in the information market. But what is the attitude of librarians towards marketing and how have their attitudes influenced their involvement in the marketing of information resources and services in university libraries? The survey research design was employed to conduct the study. Three research questions were produced to guide data collection. The population of the study consists of 120 librarians drawn from thirteen university libraries in North Central Nigeria. The questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Data obtained were analyzing descriptively with mean and standard deviation. Findings from the study revealed that the individual librarians perception of marketing of information resources and services was a major determinant of their attitude towards marketing in university libraries, and poor marketing skills was identified as a factor inhibiting the effective marketing of information resources and services in university libraries in North Central Nigeria. The study recommends that the training and retraining of librarians in the area of marketing management should be given enough attention by university libraries and that librarians should embrace the service philosophy that is users oriented and outward looking.

Keywords: Influence, Attitude. Librarians, Marketing, Information Resources, Information Services

Introduction

Marketing of goods and services involves people. Those involved with the marketing of services are always interacting with their customers to ensure quality and effective service delivery. Service marketing involves exchange relationship between the service providers and the clients. In the library scene, market-oriented thinking is a sine-qua non for success in the competitive and over changing information market. According to Kawatra (2008) Libraries have historically kept pace with changes by playing catch up. In the opinion of Kawatra no one has ever accused library personnel of being disinterested or unwilling to respond to the demands of their customers, but the notion

of focusing on the customer and identifying and meeting community needs is only now emerging in library management circles. Understanding the predisposition and attitudes of librarian toward the marketing of information resources and services especially in university libraries would bring to the fore how librarians have fared in this aspect. Kendadamath (2014) observed that there is still much resistance in the library and information service field to the use of marketing approach to management. This disposition stems from a residual feeling among librarians that marketing is somehow inappropriate for public service institution such as a library. Recent developments have made it imperative for librarians to embrace and deploy marketing principles, strategies and tools if libraries are to survive and thrive in this competitive dispensation. It is often said that attitude is everything. Therefore, effective marketing demands that the service provider possess positive attitude toward the product or service on offer and toward the customers.

In the past, librarians would be satisfied with selecting, acquiring, organizing, retrieving and disseminating information resources and services on demand by users. The era of arm chair librarianship has given way to a new era of dynamic, reactive and aggressive approach to information service delivery. Popoola and Zaid (2015) canvassed for a paradigm shift towards making librarians to change their perception and attitudes by embracing marketing as a significant managerial function that would contribute immensely to attract users to the library. The attitude of librarians towards marketing library information resources and services is pivotal as they are the intermediary between the resources and the users. According to Nwosu (2010) one of the factors hindering the adoption and application of marketing strategies and tools by librarians is the low level of knowledge and skills they possess about marketing. The underlying context of marketing whether in the primordial sense or modern sense is exchange. Shontz, Parker and Parker (2004) described marketing as a purposive group of activities which foster constructive and responsive interexchange between the providers of library and information services and the actual and potential users of the services. In the exchange between the service providers and clients, the attitude of the provider (in the case of library services) is a critical success factor .It is typical of humans to view what they do in a particular way and approach it with a certain attitude which may be positive or negative.

Statement of the problem

The librarian occupies a very strategic place in the interface between users and the information resources and services in the library. In the marketing of services, the provider and dispenser of services are part of the offering, hence they are inseparable. This implies that their disposition towards the services they provide can positively or negatively influence patronage. Where librarians have positive attitude towards the marketing of information resources and services, they are likely to carry out the activity enthusiastically and effectively. Marketing plays a very vital role in creating awareness about library and information products and services. Librarians have been trained to believe that library information resources and services are to be provided for

free. As a result, they do not see the need to invest time, energy and resources to market the resources and the services they offer to customers. In addition, the marketing orientation of librarians is generally believed to be poor.. Hitherto librarians have focused attention on the promotion of libraries using traditional techniques which cannot sufficiently reach out to the contemporary user that has been exposed to other platforms that are driven by information and communication technology. Sticking to the traditional ways of presenting information resources and services to patrons reflects a conservative attitude of the librarian which has serious implication for information service delivery.

The transition from the traditional user education hitherto carried out by university libraries to the new approach to marketing of library resources and services requires a paradigm shift including change of attitude by librarians. The era of arm chair librarianship which pervaded the practice in the profession is no longer tenable. Furthermore, the stiff competition university libraries are facing from other information providers and proliferation of online resources has become a threat to the relevance and survival of these libraries. This study examined the influence of librarians' attitude on the marketing of information resources and services in university libraries in North central Zone, Nigeria

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are;-

1. To ascertain the influence of librarians attitudes on the marketing of information resource and services in university libraries in North Central Zone. Nigeria
2. To identify the benefits of marketing information resources and services in university libraries in North Central Zone Nigeria
3. To identify barriers inhibiting the marketing of information resources and services by librarians in university libraries in North Central Zone. Nigeria

Literature Review

A crucial element in the effectiveness and sustainability of marketing information resources and services is the attitude of the librarian. Attitudes are inclinations and feelings, Prejudices or bias, preconceived notion, ideas, fears and convictions about any specific topic (Taiwo, 1998). It essentially refers to an expression of favor or disfavor toward a person, place, and thing or event. The attitude of a provider of a given service (especially library services) could positively or negatively affect the quality of the offer. Igbeka, (2008) studied the relationship between the user and the reference librarian's attitudes and concludes that to a large extent the attitude of the librarian determines the use of the library. This is not surprising because a positive attitude exhibited by the librarians toward the user could serve as a source of encouragement to patronize the library, while a negative attitude on the other hand does a lot of harm to librarian- user relationship which have serious implication for continuous patronage. There are many factors that influence the attitude of librarians towards the marketing of information resources and services in university libraries. In

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the opinion of Shontz, Parker and Parker (2008) many libraries lack the knowledge of marketing, many may not think marketing is important, or may actually have negative attitudes about marketing. Echezona, Ibebulam and Nwegbu (2016) identified factors responsible for non/low usage of resources and services in academic libraries to include advances in ICT, Inadequacy of skilled professionals and conservative attitude of professional librarians.

Anwar and Zhiwel (2021) investigated the university librarians' approaches and insight towards marketing of library sources and services in Academic libraries. The authors recommended that university authorities should support library staff to launch this method (marketing) and bring their customers to one place as well as improve their library image. According to Olubiyo and Olubiyo (2022). For effective marketing of library and information services, librarians/ libraries can either learn to adapt and seek out creative solutions to change in society or find themselves going the way of dinosaurs.

In the words of Friday and Godfrey (2023), marketing of library and information products and services is executed by human beings in libraries who view what they do in a particular way and approach it with a certain attitude. Therefore, a librarian's attitude can positively or negatively influence the marketing of information resources and services in university libraries as revealed by findings from studies conducted by (Chinwe and Anaeobi, 2015: Akpena, 2019: Akporhonor, 2020).

Mandrekar and Rodrigues (2020) in a study on the marketing of library and information products and services during Covid -19 pandemic opined that the role of marketing is more than finding customers for the available information sources, services and technologies. Hence the benefits of marketing information sources and services are enormous which demand innovative strategy in reaching customers for which the traditional approaches are no longer sufficient.

This study intends to examine how librarian's attitudes affect the marketing of information resources and services in university libraries in North Central zone of Nigeria.

Research Methodology

The survey method was employed to carry out the study. Three research objectives and three research questions were produced to guide data collection. The population of the study is made up of 120 professional Librarians drawn from University libraries located in North Central Zone of Nigeria. The questionnaire was the instrument employed to collect data. Data collected were analyzed descriptively with frequency, mean and standard deviation.

Findings and Discussion

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The researcher sought to find out the influence of librarian's attitudes on the marketing of information resources and services in the university libraries. Means computed for the items are based on the score of 3.00 and above used as the bench mark for decision.

Table 1: Influence of librarians attitudes on the marketing of information resources and services

S/N	Influences of attitudes on marketing	University types	SD	Mean
1	My attitude has no influence on marketing of information resources and services	Federal	8.6	3.9
		State	20.6	2.5
		Private	37.5	2.06
2	There is no relationship between any attitude and my involvement in marketing of information resources and services.	Federal	14.3	2.89
		State	38.2	2.06
		Private	25	2.31
3	. My attitude toward the marketing of information resources and services is influenced by my knowledge of marketing	Federal	14.3	2.89
		State	38.2	2.06
		Private	25	2.31
4	I have a positive attitude towards the marketing of information resources and services	Federal	5.8	3.32
		State	6.3	4,25
		Private	5.7	3.2
5	My perception of marketing is a function of what people close to me think about my attitude towards marketing.	Federal	5.7	3.2
		State	5.9	3.32
		Private	12.5	2.88
6	I have positive attitude towards the marketing of information resources and services because people expect me to have such disposition	Federal	4.3	3.31
		State	2.9	4.00
		Private	12.5	2.88

Data presented on the table above shows that, the opinion of the respondents indicated that their attitudinal disposition does not impact the marketing of information resources and services. The 3.9 means scores of respondents from federal universities compared to librarians from state and private universities libraries who disagreed with the statement that their attitude has no influence on the marketing of library resources and services with mean scores of 2.5 and 2.06 respectively. All the librarians however disagreed with the statement that there is no relationship between their attitude towards marketing and its impact on the marketing of information resources and services in the libraries with mean scores of 2.89,2,06 and 2.31. As a service oriented work, the implication is that librarians who are involved in presenting information resources and services to users need to have positive attitude towards marketing.

Benefits of Marketing of Information Resources and Services

To researcher also sought to find out the benefits of marketing information resources and services to university libraries. The expressed opinions of respondents are

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presented in table 2 below. Data obtained are presented in frequencies and percentages along with mean scores for the respective item. Decision on the item is based on the mean scores with 3.0 as the midpoint average. Mean of magnitude 3.0 and above would support the item as a benefit while mean score of less than 3.0 is rejected.

Table 2: Benefits of Marketing Information Resources and Services

S/N	Benefits of marketing	University types	F	SD	Mean
1	Marketing helps to attract users to the library	Federal	3	4.3	4.13
		State	4	11.8	4.24
		Private	0	0	4.50
2	It is relevant to increase users patronage	Federal	2	2.9	4.03
		State	3	8.8	4.12
		Private	0	0	4.44
3	It helps librarians to get closer to the users.	Federal	2	2.9	4.01
		State	2	5.9	4.09
		Private	0	0	4.06
4	Provides the platform to feed users with information	Federal	1	1.4	4.00
		State	2	5.8	4.24
		Private	0	0	4.31
5	It improves the level of user awareness about the library	Federal	4	5.7	4.06
		State	3	8.8	4.21
		Private	0	0	4.19
6	It helps to identify the needs of users	Federal	1	1.4	4.13
		State	2	5.9	4.29
		Private	0	0	4.13
7	It creates avenues to boost the library image.	Federal	3	4.3	4.09
		State	2	5.9	4.24
		Private	0	0	4.13
8	It helps librarians to be innovative in packaging library services	Federal	0	0	4.07
		State	2	5.9	4.35
		Private	0	0	4.25
9	It enhances the visibility of the library and the librarian within the university	Federal	2	2.9	4.10
		State	3	8.8	4.21
		Private	0	0	4.19
10	It helps librarians to determine the level of use or non use of library resources	Federal	1	1.4	4.14
		State	3	8.8	3.97
		Private	0	0	4.13

As shown in the table above, the librarians were generally of the view that effective marketing would help to attract users to the library. This was indicated by librarians from federal, state and private university libraries who agreed with mean scores of 4.13, 4.24 and 4.50. about the benefits of marketing in libraries. All the librarians irrespective of their university types agreed with mean scores of 4.03, 4.12 and 4.44 respectively that marketing is relevant and beneficial for increasing users patronage and that it helps librarians to get closer to the users.. This is indicated with mean scores 4.01, 4.09 and

4.06 by librarians from federal State and private universities respectively for item 3 in the table.

Apart from increasing the number of users, the librarians were unanimous in their agreement with mean scores of 4.00, 4.24 and 4.31 that marketing provides the platforms for feeding users with information about available information and services. This they agreed improves the level of user's awareness about the library. From the observation of the expressed opinions in the table, perception of marketing of resources and services in the library is a major determinant of the librarian's attitude towards the marketing of resources and services available in the university libraries. This finding is supported by the findings of Shontz, Parker and Parker (2004) that librarians can clearly not assume that if their library offers good services, they do not need to worry about marketing them effectively. This implies that it is not enough to market library resources and services but the attitude of librarians towards this activity is critically important. This position is supported by Spalding and Wang (2006) who stated that librarians are discovering that by using marketing principles and techniques they can understand better their user's needs, justify funding, communicate more effectively with a variety of external audiences, and achieve greater efficiency and optimal results in delivering products and services that meets the identified needs of their clients.

Factor Inhibiting the Marketing of Information Resources and Services in University Libraries in North Central Zone, Nigeria

To identify the factors inhibiting the marketing of information resources and services in university libraries, a number of factors were listed in table 3 on which the respondents indicated their responses. Decisions on the factors are based on the midpoint average of 3.0.

Table 3: Factor Inhibiting the Marketing of Information Resources and Services

S/N	Benefits of marketing	University types	F	SD	Mean
1	Lack of knowledge of marketing by librarians	Federal	3	4.3	3.9
		State	2	5.9	3.78
		Private	1	6.3	3.69
2	Poor marketing skill of librarian	Federal	0	0	3.89
		State	1	2.9	3.91
		Private	1	6.3	3.81
3	Failure to adopt or recognize the use of marketing in the library	Federal	3	4.3	3.86
		State	0	0	4.29
		Private	0	0	4.19
4	Lack of understanding of what marketing is and what it involves	Federal	1	1.4	3.91
		State	0	0	3.97
		Private	0	0	4.00
5	Disagreement about the role of the client in determining the library's	Federal	4	5.7	3.51
		State	0	0	3.71

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	products.	Private	1	6.3	3.13
6	Negative attitude toward marketing by librarians.	Federal	3	4.3	3.64
		State	1	2.9	3.88
		Private	1	6.3	3.69
7	Non- acceptance of marketing as a primary managerial function in libraries.	Federal	3	4.3	3.63
		State	0	0	4.12
		Private	0	0	3.88
8	Reluctance to embrace the marketing concept by librarians	Federal	4	5.7	3.64
		State	0	0	4.03
		Private	0	0	4.06
9	Inability of librarians to design and implement winning marketing strategies	Federal	4	5.7	3.63
		State	1	2.9	3.82
		Private	0	0	3.75
10	The wrong notion that equals marketing with selling only	Federal	1	1.4	3.69
		State	1	2.9	4.00
		Private	0	0	3.88

Prominent among the factors inhibiting the marketing of information resources and services as indicated by librarians in university libraries in north central zone of Nigeria was the failure to adopt or recognize the use of marketing in libraries. This factor was scored the highest with means of 3.86, 4.29 and 4.19 by the libraries respectively. Other factors identified include the inadequate knowledge of marketing by librarians with mean scores of 3.91, 3.79 and 3.69 by Federal, State and Private University respondents. Also, poor marketing skill of librarians with mean scores of 3.89, 3.91 and 3.81 respectively was identified as inhibiting factor. Lack of understanding of what marketing is and what it involves by librarians in the university libraries was another factor which is affecting the marketing of information resources and services. This opinion cut across all the university types with mean score of 3.91, 3.97 and 4.0 by the Federal, State and Private University libraries

The observation of expressed opinion in the table shows that all these challenges were perceived to be major factors inhibiting the marketing of information resources and services. The finding here contrasts the finding of Rowley (2010), Olugenga and Pius (2010), who identified the challenges of budget cuts, increasing user base, the rapid growth of information resources, rising costs, and complexity in information requirements as the factors forcing librarians to adopt marketing to improve the patronage of information resources and services.

Conclusion and Recommendations

For librarians to effectively market information resources and services,, especially in the academic library environment, they need to have a positive attitude towards marketing. It is worrisome that despite the humongous financial resources invested in acquiring, processing and disseminating

information resources in university libraries, they are often underutilized. This is partly attributable to the negative attitudes towards marketing by librarians, which often lead to ineffective marketing of information resources and services, and consequently resulting to underutilization of available information resources in university libraries. Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Librarians should be more proactive and dynamic in the packaging and presentation of library resources and services to the users especially using the social media and other platforms to reach out to their users wherever they are, whoever they are and whenever they need information.
- ii. University libraries should embrace a new paradigm in information service delivery that is user-need driven and outward looking thereby departing from the arm chair practices of the past years. This may involve crafting winning strategies that would make the library users (customers) the main focus of her marketing efforts in order to improve library patronage by clients.
- iii. University libraries should vigorously pursue human capacity development building activities to train and retrain librarians in order to equip them with relevant marketing principles, strategies and tools in order to maximize the benefits of marketing information resources and services and to minimize barriers associated with the marketing of library information resources and services.

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