

LIBRARIAN'S ATTITUDE, PERCEPTION AND SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE MARKETING STRATEGIES IN LIBRARIES IN A CHANGING WORLD

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Abstract

The study was an attempt to study librarian's attitude, perception and skills for application marketing strategies in library and information centers in the changing world occasioned by innovations. Relevant literatures relating to the study were reviewed. It was a descriptive survey research and the population of the study comprised of 1,167 librarians working across libraries of various types (public library, academic library and research, and special library) in Nigeria through purposive sampling techniques. The study was guided by three research questions and the data was collected through validated questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using statistical mean to answer the research questions. The theoretical framework for the study was marketing mix theory by McCarthy. The findings of the study revealed an overall mean rating of $X=3.19$ which showed that librarians in Nigeria had positive attitude toward the application marketing strategies for library and information services. The respondents had positive perception toward the application of marketing strategies in libraries with an overall mean rating of $X=3.06$. The study revealed an overall mean rating of $X=3.05$ of the research question on the skills and it is an indication that librarians have the skills required in the application marketing strategies for library and information services and needed to put it in use.

Introduction

The latest development in the field of library and information services has pushed libraries and librarians out of their shell and they are becoming innovative in order fit into the new paradigms. Libraries are no long with walls and bricks but have become a space. they has become a space of many possibilities where there is a high level guarantee of enhanced service delivery, due to the possibilities introduced by globalization, free market economy, liberal democracy and ICT revolution. Libraries are converting their traditional products and services into digital platforms to comply with the trend of globalization. They are increasingly attracting prospective information seekers into the libraries to leverage on the potentials of the library. It has become mandatory for librarians to deploy marketing strategies in their quest to get the

attention of prospective information seekers into the library patronage. The application and deployment of marketing strategies in the 21st century is so apt because ICT revolution is seriously pushing the libraries into competition with the various emerging information services providers, who provide same information services which libraries provides, even the emerging competitors provide such information services in unprofessional manners.

Leeder (2008) postulate that these days academic libraries are grasping at every possible product from federated searching to Library Thing that might ease our students' apparent impatience with the challenges of research. After all, the 2002 Pew Internet & American Life report, "The Internet Goes to College," made it clear that our students rely on the Web first when they're doing research, and generally use the library only as a latter resort. If academic libraries don't make it easier for students to find relevant information for their course projects, they may not come at all. We may as well just hand Google Scholar the keys. In the same vein, Adekunmisi (2013) said that library should therefore communicate and work with its customers (marketing) and funding authorities to provide information about what the library is doing and to enable the library to learn about the community it serves. Therefore, for libraries to continue to receive library clients or clientele, they have to aggressively apply the principles of marketing strategies in information service delivery. The libraries already have identified products that can be market to prospective library users, the products only require packaging and repackaging to attract the prospective library users.

Marketing strategy is a set of integrated decisions and actions by which a business expects to achieve its marketing objectives and meet the value requirements of its customers (Olson, Slater & Hult, 2014). Marketing strategy is concerned with decisions relating to market segmentation and targeting, and the development of a positioning strategy based on product, price, promotion and distribution decisions. Library products and services are library resources, which include personnel, infrastructure and information which are made available to the prospective library users or information seekers. According to Adegote (2015) library services are defined as help or assistance given to users in their quest for information resources. Amaechi, Enweani and Eke (2018), complement Adegote (2015) saying that library services are resources and activities provided by libraries to address information needs of users.

Statement of problem

Academic libraries are grasping at every means to show their relevance to their clients through various attractive packages and products because of the threat and competition from other of unorganized sources of information. Internet as a medium has changed and still changing the ways information is being search, share, copy, disseminate and preserved. Therefore, for libraries to remain relevant as the custodian and disseminator of credible information, this study is committed to ascertain librarians' attitude, perception and skills for effective marketing strategies in libraries in a changing World. The purpose of study was to ascertain librarians' attitude, perception and skills for effective marketing strategies in libraries. The research

questions sorted by the study were; what are librarians' attitude, perception and skills for effective marketing strategies in libraries?

The findings of the study would be of immense benefit to library and information science professional, because among others the findings would help library administrator and sponsors and promoters to understand librarian's attitude, perception and skills toward the application of marketing strategies in libraries to increase library patronage.

Review of related literature:

Information services are services provided by the library which draws attention to information possessed in the library in expectations of a demand (Adegoke, 2015). Information services encompass means through which librarians directly supply users with information resources including all the interfaces created by librarians and adjusted to users through which users could independently find needed information (Stojanovski & Papic, 2012). The IFLA Digital Reference Guidelines (2012) stated that although, the concept of information services could encompass different segments of libraries' activities in literature it is usually related to the reference services.

Marketing and Marketing strategies

Acharya & Vagdal (2023), in an increasingly digital age, libraries have been compelled to adapt and innovate in order to remain relevant and effectively serve their communities. Library marketing has emerged as a critical discipline to promote library services, engage users, and communicate the library's value in a rapidly changing landscape.

Marketing helps in creating awareness of existing and new goods and services to desired consumers. This can be done by using different channels to take your product and services before the desired consumers. According to Clifford and Olurotimi, (2015), marketing is an ongoing and dynamic strategy because customer needs and library products change with time. Designing and implementing an appropriate marketing plan guarantees the survival and growth of the library and information services.

Marketing Strategies are adopted by libraries in order to lure more library users into the library. Marketing of library services like any other services usually founded on a sound marketing strategy. Marketing is the process of planning, pricing, promoting, and distributing goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy the library and the customer. Marketing is a necessity, if libraries and librarians are to remain relevant in the academic community. Marketing of library services involves activities such as identifying user's needs, designing suitable services or products to meet their needs, communication and distribution to inform, motivate and serve the users.(Jestin & Parameswari 2002 and Potter 2012)

For libraries, marketing is about a set of activities including understanding client needs, determining market niches, identifying products and services, building client relationships and creating 'marketing mix'. Marketing is not just about promoting new

services and products but also bringing awareness to clients of existing services and products and determining their appropriateness (Sharma & Bhardwaj, 2009)

Librarians' Attitude towards Marketing Library and Information Services.

Benson, Udo-Anyanwu and Onuoha (2016) and Popoola and Zaid (2015) stressed the need for positive attitude towards marketing library and information service among the librarians, they argued that it is paradigm shift for the 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. Shontz, Parker and Parker (2004) identified the attitude of librarians in public libraries towards the marketing of library services and relate this attitude to selected independent variables. The finding shows that librarians who have taken a course in marketing in the past one year hold a more positive attitude towards marketing. Librarians who had taken a course or attended a workshop in marketing and those who perceived marketing positively considered marketing practice to be a high priority in their libraries. There is a connection between marketing attitudes and behavior. As Chaudhary (2011) put it "to effectively reach potential users, it has become imperative that positive attitudes toward marketing be part of the organizational culture of libraries.

Methods

The study adopted descriptive research design being a study that is interested in obtaining information systematically to describe a phenomenon, situation, or population. The population of the study comprised 1,167 librarians working across libraries of various types (public library, academic library and research and special library) in Nigeria through purposive sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire which was validation by experts and the reliability of the instrument was also established. The reliability of the instrument was established through internal consistency method of reliability. The reliability test conducted on 25 librarians at the University of Abuja showed an overall co-efficient of internal consistency of $r=0.98$. The data collected were analyzed using statistical mean and answering research questions, statistical mean acceptance score was set at $X=3.00$ and above, any score below $X=3.00$ was considered not acceptable. The theoretical framework for the study was marketing mix by McCarthy that is to say that the study is anchored on marketing mix theory. One thousand, one hundred and sixty seven questionnaires (1,167) were distributed and 667 were certified as properly filled and accepted for the study, 677 out of 1,167 represent 58 % which is considered adequate for the study.

Research Question One

What is the attitude of librarians toward effective marketing strategies in libraries?

Table 1: Respondents' mean ratings on the attitude of librarians toward effective marketing strategies in libraries (n = 677)

Item statement	X	Decision
I am proactive toward applying marketing strategies in promoting the services offers in the Library	3.27	Agree
Marketing in Library is necessary as it enhance the ability of library to meet current and future demands	3.75	Strongly Agree
Library managers should prioritize the application of marketing strategies in university Libraries.	3.75	Strongly Agree
I am not skeptical about the use of marketing strategies in the library	3.16	Agree
As a Librarian, I am enthusiastic about the marketing of library resources and services	3.27	Agree
Marketing will increase users awareness towards the use of library	2.67	Agree
As marketing lure more users into the libraries my productivity increase	3.05	Agree
Marketing enhances my Knowledge on library users need and how to satisfy them	3.04	Agree
Marketing in library make librarians more professional and productive	2.87	Agree
Library marketing helps the library attain her set objectives	3.04	Agree
Overall mean score or rating: Attitude	3.19	

The attitude of librarians toward effective marketing strategies in libraries as revealed by the data collected is that many librarians with a mean score of $X=3.75$ agreed that marketing in Library is necessary as it enhance the ability of library to meet current and future demands as well as agreed with the statement that Library managers should prioritize the application of marketing strategies in university Libraries. That data further revealed that very few people agreed with the statement that Marketing will increase users' awareness towards the use of library as indicated by a low mean score of $X=2.67$. However, the overall mean score of the attitude of librarians toward effective marketing strategies in the library was $X=3.19$ which is above the acceptable standard mean score of $X=3.00$. The implication of this finding is that librarians are

proactive toward applying marketing strategies in promoting the services offers in the Library.

Research Question 2

What is librarians' perception on effective marketing strategies in libraries?

Table 2: Respondents' mean ratings on librarians' perception on effective marketing strategies in libraries. (n = 677)

Item statement	X̄	Decision
Library marketing is vital in keeping our users and potential users informed about the resources and services that match their needs and interests	3.11	Agree
Effective library marketing strategies increase the popularity of the library.	3.24	Agree
Library Marketing is the link between the library user's needs and its resources and services	3.22	Agree
With constant competition from other information providers, librarians need to apply marketing strategies	3.11	Agree
Library marketing reminds users that library remain a great choice for meeting their information needs in today's world	3.34	Agree
Through library marketing library can display or introduce their new collection to library users	3.35	Agree
Social media networking is not effective means of marketing library and information services	3.12	Disagree
Marketing in library help library to build clientele-library relationships to increase repeated patronage	2.88	Agree
Application of marketing strategies can undermine the library	2.89	Agree
Applying marketing strategies in libraries is counter productive	2.36	Disagree
Overall mean score or rating: Library marketing perception	3.062	

The perception of librarians towards effective marketing strategies in libraries as revealed by the data collected is that many respondents with a mean score of $X=3.34$ agreed that effective library marketing remain an integral function of the libraries as the libraries strive to meet the information needs of her teaming users and the data also confirm with mean score $X=3.34$ that effective marketing strategies helps the library to introduce their new collection to the library users and it is capable of increasing the popularity of the library. The data further revealed that very few librarians with a low mean score of $X=2.36$ agreed with the statement that effective marketing strategies will be counterproductive in the libraries, however if this assertion is nit address

However, the overall mean score of the perception of librarians towards effective marketing strategies in library was $X=3.62$ which is above the acceptable standard mean score of $X=3.00$. The implication of this finding is that librarians have positive perception toward the application effective marketing strategies in promoting the Library.

Research question 3

What marketing skills possess by librarians towards effective marketing strategies in libraries?

Table 3: Respondents' mean ratings on the skills possess by librarians towards effective marketing strategies in libraries.(n = 677)

Item statement	X	Decision
I have the skills to display new arrivals (books) to users	2.96	Agree
I have the skills to design captivating posters and catching bulletins to create awareness about our services and lure users into the library	3.16	Agree
I have expertise to organize exhibition of products and services to users	3.10	Agree
I am vast experience in attracting library user through orientation programmes to increase user patronage	2.97	Agree
I conduct outreach programmes where I give out brochures to target groups to lure them into the library	2.86	Agree
I use my social media networking skills market library and information services to prospective library users	2.91	Agree
I leverage on Internet of Things to link the library with prospective library users	3.20	Agree
I build clientele relationships to increase repeated patronage	2.96	Agree
I organize information literacy programmes	3.16	Agree
I give public lectures/symposiums on library products and services	3.26	Agree
Overall mean score or rating: Marketing skills	3.05	

The marketing skills possess by librarians for effective marketing strategies in libraries as revealed by the data collected is that many respondents with a mean score of $X=3.26$ agreed they have skills to give public lectures, organize symposiums and information literacy programmes on library products and services as a marketing strategies to lure the users. The librarians also affirmed that they leverage on Internet of Things to market the library products and services with mean score of $X=3.20$. The data further revealed that very few librarians with a low mean score of $X=2.86$ agreed with the statement that giving out brochures to target groups as marketing strategies can lure the users into the library.

However, the overall mean score of the perception of librarians towards effective marketing strategies in library was $X=3.05$ which is above the acceptable standard mean score of $X=3.00$. The implication of this finding is that the librarians are skillful in the use of marketing strategies to promoting the Library.

Findings and Discussion

The study was able to establish that librarians understudied have positive attitude toward the effective marketing strategies for library and information services. The respondents proved that they are proactive toward applying marketing strategies in promoting the services offers in their respective library. In line with Acharya & Vagdal (2023) in their study, this current study agreed that the application of marketing strategies enhances librarians and library to meet current and future demands.

In agreement with Atuase, D. and Maluleka, J. (2023) study the respondents affirmed that library manager should prioritize the application of marketing strategies in libraries. Librarians agreed that marketing will increase user's awareness and lure them into the libraries the more. The study reveal that the application of marketing strategies will enhances librarians individual professional's productivity and increase their professional knowledge on how best to satisfy the library users need.

The study reveals that the respondents were verse in application of marketing strategies as keep positive perception of the terms. The research respondents agreed that effective library marketing strategies increase awareness of library's value and to expand its user base. The respondents opined that library marketing is the link between the library user's needs and its resources and services. In sharp contrast, Estell and Stephens (2011) in their study revealed that academic librarians were unclear on the concept of marketing in library.

The respondents agreed that librarians need to communicate to their users to assure the users that the library can meet their needs better than other providers. The study affirmed that library marketing reminds users that their library is still a great choice for meeting their information needs in today's world. The respondents disagreed that the use of marketing strategies cannot and will not undermine the library. The respondents also disagreed that applying marketing strategies in libraries is counterproductive.

The study shows that library and librarians have the skills required in the application of marketing strategies for library and information services. The respondents indicated that they have the skills required to display new arrivals (books) to users. The respondents have the necessary skills required to design captivating posters and catching bulletins to create awareness about our services and lure users into the library. The study proved that librarians have expertise to organize exhibition of products and services to users. The respondents are experience and have all it takes to attract library users through orientation programmes to increase user patronage. The study indicates that librarians can leverage on Internet of Things to link the library with prospective library users, build clientele relationships to increase repeated patronage, organize information literacy programmes and give public lectures/symposiums on library products and services.

Based on the findings of this study, it is established that the current study is in conformity with the following studies Kanaujia (2004), Yi, Lodge and McCausland

(2013), Eke and Njoku (2012), Garoufallou, Emmanouel&Siatiri, Rania &Zafeiriou, Georgia &Balampanidou, Ekaterini. (2013), Nancy (2020), Lolade, Sowemimo, Oluwatoyin&Fadekemi (2018) and Onwuekwe (2022), wherein in their various studies established that librarians have positive attitude toward the application of marketing strategies in the library and information; sound and positive perception on the marketing strategies in library and information science and skillful enough to apply marketing strategies in library and information science. The finding of this study is found to be in conflict with the finding of Estell and Stephens (2011), who, in their study conducted on three Universities in the United Kingdom reported that librarians were unclear and somehow confused on the concept of marketing in library and information services.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is evidently clear that library and information services are desirous of effective marketing strategies in order to continuous adaptation to library user's expectations. Library marketing strategies will open up the library because librarians exhibit positive attitude, sound judgment and perception on the concept of marketing strategies. The respondent through the instrument demonstrated enough skills on the application of marketing strategies in library and information services. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher makes the following suggestions:

- a. Relevant stakeholders should increase the level of sensitization of librarians on the important of marketing as a tool to increase users' awareness toward the use of the Library.
- b. Librarians should be encouraged to maintain and sustain the current tempo on application of marketing skills through training on advance customers care services.
- c. Library management should monitor and appraisal the performance of librarians on the application of marketing skills and reward for good performance should be enticing enough.

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