

IMPROVING LIBRARIANS' BEHAVIOUR ON MARKETING OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

This study examines strategies for improving librarians' behaviour towards the marketing of library and information services in university libraries in Nigeria. As the rapid emergence of modern technology during this period creates rising competition between libraries and online bookshops as well as digital information providers, university libraries in Nigeria must develop proactive marketing approaches to improve their public visibility and service quality to adapt to the changing user expectations. The study investigates the importance of marketing in improving service delivery and raising public engagement while examining how librarians' attitudes and perceptions impact the attainment of marketing initiatives. It emphasizes the advantages of implementing a proactive, customer-centric method and the obstacles posed by resistance to change. To resolve these issues, the study suggests training programs, raising a culture of novelty, and gaining leadership commitment as vital approaches for enhancing librarians' involvement in marketing duties. Furthermore, it offers practical solutions to common counterarguments, such as concerns over increased librarian workloads, lack of financial support, and limited available resources, by promoting the incorporation of marketing activities into librarians' current duties and using digital tools that are cost-effective. By integrating these methods, university libraries in Nigeria can enable librarians to keenly promote services, making sure that university libraries continue to be forceful knowledge centers in the digital era.

Keywords: Librarians' behaviours, marketing library services and information services, University libraries

Introduction

University libraries act as an institution that disseminates information and also provides services to users of all demographics, no matter their age or social or personal background or interests. The rapid emergence of modern technology during this period creates rising competition between libraries and online bookshops as well as digital information providers, which threatens their continued significance and public perception (Yunhee & Shagun, 2024; Rowley, 2011). University libraries in Nigeria must develop proactive marketing approaches to improve their public visibility and service quality in order to adapt to changing user expectations

(Acharya & Vagdal, 2023). The transformation represents a vital requirement for libraries because they are moving from their storage role to develop dynamic information centers which use technological resources to boost information accessibility.

Marketing initiatives in libraries establish a complete system which starts by assessing user demands followed by organization of services and resource promotion while ensuring proper service delivery. According to Ogunbodede and Okwu (2023), marketing library resources and services refers to the practice of promoting the library resources and services and programs to their end users. The main objective focuses on delivering appropriate information to individuals at the time they need it to guarantee service specificity for different user groups. Library marketing efforts facilitate better use of resources while making libraries a fundamental source for learners seeking academic knowledge and research development (Oladotun et al., 2023).

The achievement of this objective depends heavily on the effective implementation of the marketing mix elements of product, price, place and promotion. The marketing mix serves as both a tactical framework and an operational model which helps libraries match their service delivery with customer expectations and builds positive user satisfaction and enhances organizational reputation. Moqiseh et al. (2020) noted that the application of the marketing mix effectively enables libraries to stand apart from digital competitors through their unique features of personalized research assistance and collaborative learning sitting rooms along with carefully selected materials. An effective implementation of the marketing mix helps libraries develop solid connections with their communities, which results in both trust and loyal relationships. University libraries achieve sustained community value and long-term user engagement when they identify exclusive user requirements to develop service solutions (Paul et al., 2024).

Librarians in universities in Nigeria need to actively use marketing strategies to support their organizational sustainability since both social transformations and technological innovations affect the information environment (Ogunbodede & Ivwighrehweta, 2020). University libraries in Nigeria must use marketing as their fundamental operational strategy to deliver effective service promotions to attract users and showcase their worth in this contemporary competitive information environment. This approach involves both promoting current library offerings and creating new services that use modern technology to fulfil

contemporary user requirements (Da Silva & Minciotti, 2021). University libraries can offer digital literacy instruction, virtual reference services, and electronic resource access to accommodate users who wish to use services remotely.

Librarians' attitudes together with their perceptions directly determine the outcome of their marketing initiatives. According to Benson et al. (2016), the level of marketing concept knowledge among librarians directly impacts the effectiveness of service promotion. Librarians with positive workplace attitudes demonstrate willingness to promote their services while maintaining strong customer relationships, which leads to better public perception about the library. However, the adoption of innovative strategies faces restrictions due to negative attitudes that include resistance to change together with limited marketing skills or traditional operating approaches (Yi, 2016; Koontz & Mon, 2014). Such negative attitudes decrease user engagement and reduce the library's efficiency in competing effectively in digital information systems. University libraries in Nigeria success in the modern information ecosystem depends on librarians' understanding of marketing principles and positive attitudes toward service promotion policies.

Importance of Marketing in University Libraries

Modern libraries achieve their significance and market competitiveness through effective strategic marketing measures. University libraries in Nigeria need to promote their distinct resources and services actively because online information providers such as Google and Wikipedia, alongside digital databases, have taken control of the information landscape. The position of solely providing access to knowledge no longer exists exclusively with libraries. The excessive amount of free online information might cause users to not recognize the valuable resources university libraries provide, which consist of carefully selected collections and specialized research help as well as subscriptions to credible content (Taylor & Francis, 2013; Head, 2013). University libraries in Nigeria can successfully communicate their advantages through marketing to showcase their role as sources of dependable, verified information beyond what users find on unauthenticated websites. Librarians also provide individual research assistance and offer cost-free access to both e-books and research databases that remain beyond the public reach without library privileges (Whitworth 2023; George et al. 2022). The strategic

marketing of these library services allows university libraries to demonstrate their essential contributions toward addressing the digital media dominance.

The fundamental goals of a library, which include delivering contemporary information and creating a learning center and community gathering point, pair perfectly with strategic marketing approaches. Marketing activities generate awareness about library programs as well as new acquisitions and expand their user base by attracting individuals who don't understand a library's digital transformation role (Acharya & Vagdal, 2023; American Library Association, 2012). The library's presence in the community materializes through events and outreach programs while partnerships with local groups make libraries maintain their critical role above basic book provision. Through social media campaigns as well as newsletters and collaborative projects, university libraries in Nigeria can expand their influence and draw in potential users who lack understanding about their modern functions (Breeding, 2021). These strategic developments will sustain library success, enabling them to maintain their important position as digital-age institutions.

Impact of Librarians' Attitudes and Perceptions

Library and information service success heavily depends on the perceptions and attitudes maintained by librarians in their marketing efforts. A positive attitude consisting of innovative openness together with customer-centrism strengthens marketing initiative outcomes (Michael & Olayemi, 2023; Akporhonor, 2020). Librarians enhance the organization's vitality through their ongoing engagement with users while bringing innovative promotional methods to service promotion within a welcoming environment. User engagement increases while community participation grows because library staff members convey passion that positions the establishment as an important modern resource.

Conversely, service delivery becomes impeded when negative attitudes regarding change resistance and a refusal to adopt new marketing approaches or insufficient promotional confidence arise (Yi, 2016; Koontz & Mon, 2014). Libraries encounter retention issues due to librarians' unwillingness to adapt their services to meet the changing needs of their users. A low marketing awareness combined with indifference toward promotional efforts will lead to

underutilization of available library resources and reduce both community engagement and public understanding of library worth.

Librarians need to enhance their behaviour towards marketing library and information services because this ensures libraries maintain both relevancy and accessibility. This includes using proactive communication, learning marketing strategies and comprehending the significance of outreach activities (Osinulu et al., 2018). Librarians require appropriate training along with professional development initiatives and mental framework adjustments toward user-driven service promotion to develop their institutional advocacy skills (Urhefe-Okotie, 2023; Koontz & Mon, 2014). Library sustainability in digital environments gains strength when librarians become actively involved with marketing strategies which improve visitor experience.

Strategies for Improving Librarians' Behaviour

The improvement of librarians' marketing efforts for library and information services demands the implementation of specific strategies that increase their understanding and their behavioural skills while encouraging proactive action. Training programs on marketing principles represent an effective strategy to develop librarian competencies (Yi 2016). The programs should educate librarians about key subjects, including electronic marketing together with user engagement strategies, in addition to branding expertise and communication methods. The training will help build librarians confidence in marketing library resources and services, organizing outreach programs and the use of social media and email campaigns to reach communities.

Librarians attitudes toward marketing improve substantially when the organization prioritizes innovation together with collaborative teamwork (Osinulu et al., 2018). Librarians achieve improved creative solutions for service promotion when groups share ideas as part of collaborative team environments for exploring new methods which deliver engaging programs and respond to changing patron requirements. The implementation of experimental opportunities in marketing initiatives such as promotional campaigns and interactive outreach activities brings out active involvement from librarians. Partnership with departments throughout the institution

and community groups, as well as regional influencers, enables the expansion of marketing initiatives and strengthens their effectiveness (Smiley, 2022).

The motivation of librarians to participate in marketing activities depends heavily on strong leadership support (Uwandu & Osuji, 2022). Library administrators should support marketing initiatives through investments and incentives to maintain active engagement. Leadership can develop a marketing orientation through goal-setting with celebration of outreach success and by merging marketing responsibilities into librarians' professional work. Library leaders who provide constructive directions with growth opportunities will transform marketing into essential library operations from marginal status.

University libraries that allocate resources for training, combined with cultural innovation and secured leadership commitment, will enable the library staff to lead their organization's marketing initiatives, thus enhancing community awareness and sustainable operations in this evolving information environment.

Overcoming Challenges: Practical Solutions for Marketing Library Services

Many may argue that the addition of marketing responsibilities might increase librarian workloads to perform their core duties, such as research support, cataloguing and classification along with user assistance. Furthermore, the lack of financial support and limited available resources in many libraries often present challenges for pursuing successful marketing campaigns. While these issues are cogent, the need to market library services surpasses these arguments in a competitive digital information environment.

To address the workload problem, librarians should blend marketing activities with their current duties instead of handling them as additional activities. Librarians should integrate promotional activities into their existing duties by providing recommendations of library events and displaying virtual resources while also utilizing email-based communication and social media connections to reach users (Simonson 2017 Halevi; O'Hanlon 2016). Staff members can easily include basic marketing messages about new acquisitions and user success stories within their routine operations without creating extra stress.

Marketing can remain effective irrespective of budgetary limitations, which allows libraries to create impactful initiatives without high expenses. University libraries can use digital tools that cost little money, such as social media platforms and email newsletters and community

partnerships, to reach more people (Desygner Team, 2024; Simonson, 2017). Partnerships with local businesses, schools and cultural institutions can create no-cost promotional activities for the library marketing strategies. Librarians can also benefit from cost-effective training programs on marketing techniques for better resource utilization.

Instead of considering marketing a financial weight, it serves as a strategic business investment that builds up the library's path toward success. Libraries can boost user participation through well-organized marketing methods which combine multiple approaches while staying inside budgetary constraints to establish their worth in modern digital times.

Conclusion

University libraries in Nigeria must adopt marketing strategies to stay valuable and competitive in the expanding digital information era. University libraries can prove their unique value to users by conducting effective promotions that distinguish their offerings from online competitors. Marketing success for libraries primarily depends on how dedicated librarians are to performing promotional work. Marketing success depends strongly on staff attitudes toward change and their capacity for innovation, together with their service-oriented approach, yet resistance to these elements impedes outreach and service delivery potential.

University libraries need to create professional development programs which teach librarians marketing skills, establish collaborative environments and get strong leadership support. Libraries can deal with workload problems and financial challenges by implementing marketing strategies through current workflow processes alongside inexpensive digital tools.

Marketing serves as a strategic business investment that builds up the library's path towards success and should not be considered an extra load. University libraries in Nigeria can increase user participation, enlarge their range and establish themselves as an essential organization in the growing digital era.

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