

Challenges of Marketing Information Resources and Services in University Libraries in Bayelsa State Nigeria



Tantangan Sumber Daya dan Layanan Informasi Pemasaran di Perpustakaan Universitas di Bayelsa State Nigeria

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Abstract

Background: University libraries in Nigeria are confronting the issue of underutilization of their resources and services, which can be ascribed to weak marketing efforts. **Purpose:** This study aimed at examining the challenges of marketing information resources and services in university libraries in Bayelsa State Nigeria. **Method:** A descriptive survey design was used for the investigation. The study population included 52 librarians from four university libraries in Bayelsa State. A total enumeration sample strategy was used to collect data via an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to 52 librarians, and 47 responded, yielding a 90% response rate. The data were analysed using frequency counts and simple percentages. **Results:** The results of the study show that all university libraries in Bayelsa State use a variety of marketing techniques to advertise their information resources and services, including library orientation, user education, social media platforms, exhibitions, and displays. Effective marketing efforts in these libraries were, however, hampered by issues like insufficient budget, poor Internet connectivity, a lack of marketing policies, and the absence of a specialized marketing staff. **Conclusion:** Based on the findings, the researchers concluded that university libraries should be supported by adequate funding, improve Internet connectivity, establish a dedicated marketing department or team, collaborate with academic departments and faculty, gather user feedback, and invest in professional development opportunities to enhance marketing efforts.

Keywords: Challenges of Marketing; Information Resources and Services; University Libraries; Bayelsa State

Abstrak

Latar Belakang: Perpustakaan universitas di Nigeria menghadapi masalah kurangnya pemanfaatan sumber daya dan layanan mereka, yang dapat dianggap berasal dari upaya pemasaran yang lemah. Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji tantangan sumber daya dan layanan informasi pemasaran di perpustakaan universitas di Bayelsa State Nigeria. **Metode:** Sebuah desain survei deskriptif digunakan untuk penyelidikan. Populasi penelitian termasuk 52 pustakawan dari empat perpustakaan universitas di Bayelsa State. Strategi sampel pencacahan total digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data melalui kuesioner online. Kuesioner dibagikan kepada 52 pustakawan, dan 47 menjawab, menghasilkan tingkat respon 90%. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan perhitungan frekuensi dan persentase sederhana. **Hasil:** Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa semua perpustakaan universitas di Bayelsa State menggunakan berbagai teknik pemasaran untuk mengiklankan sumber informasi dan layanan mereka, termasuk orientasi perpustakaan, pendidikan pengguna, platform media sosial, pameran, dan pajangan. Namun, upaya pemasaran yang efektif di perpustakaan ini terhambat oleh masalah seperti anggaran yang tidak mencukupi, konektivitas Internet yang buruk, kurangnya kebijakan pemasaran, dan tidak adanya staf pemasaran khusus. **Kesimpulan:** Berdasarkan temuan, para peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa perpustakaan universitas harus didukung oleh pendanaan yang memadai, meningkatkan konektivitas Internet, membentuk departemen atau tim pemasaran khusus, berkolaborasi dengan departemen akademik dan fakultas, mengumpulkan umpan balik pengguna, dan berinvestasi

dalam peluang pengembangan profesional untuk meningkatkan upaya pemasaran.

Kata kunci: Tantangan Pemasaran; Sumber Daya Informasi dan layanan; Perpustakaan Universitas; Negara Bagian Bayelsa

I. INTRODUCTION

Background. Academic libraries are those that cater to the needs of faculty, staff, researchers, and students in colleges, universities, and other academic institutions (Ubogu, 2019; Haliso, 2011). These libraries are specifically designed to support the academic community and provide resources and services tailored to their needs. The sources include publications like books, journals, e-books, online journals, e-databases, maps, and official government papers. Students and researchers can access these resources both on-campus and remotely, making it simpler for them to get the data they require. Academic libraries also provide a wide range of services to aid their users, such as teaching information literacy, research assistance, research skills, and technology support (Breen et al., 2023; Oghenekaro, 2019; Anyaoku et al., 2015; Kennan et al., 2014). They could also include readers' services, reference services, circulation services, indexing services, abstracting services, Internet services, and instruction on information literacy. University libraries offer not just the tools and services, but also highly qualified and experienced librarians who specialize in finding, choosing, circulating, and organizing information (George et al., 2022). Khan and Bhatti (2012) noted that librarians are skilled at assessing users' information needs, navigating complex data structures, and using a variety of technologies to analyse vast amounts of data. They contribute unique expertise and abilities to help the university community's academic and research endeavours.

The library must make sure that users are taking advantage of its resources and services in a way that justifies the enormous investment made in them. The user is thought to be the most logical source to judge whether or not the library is fulfilling its purpose. However, with the advent of the Internet and competition from other sources of information, university libraries are faced with the need to market their resources and services to users. The possibilities for students, lecturers, staff, and other users to find information have increased because of the Internet's accessibility and the existence of online bookshops and dealers (Olorunfemi and Ipadeola, 2018). To stay relevant and continue to offer vital services to students and staff, they must better convey the value they give to their users and demonstrate how they support the goals of their institutions (Ogunbodede and Ivwighrehweta, 2020). This can only be accomplished by successfully and actively marketing its resources and services, which includes putting into practice techniques like user education programs, offering guidance and support, and regularly evaluating and enhancing the resources' accessibility and usability. By carrying out this duty, the library can enhance the worth and influence of its services for the benefit of its patrons.

Marketing refers to a broad category of actions and procedures used to advertise and sell goods and services to consumers. According to Kotler (2010), marketing entails selling, advertising, physical distribution, sales, and promotion. Marketing library resources and services is the process of promoting the library resources, services, and programs to its users. This covers a wide range of products and services, including print publications, online journals, databases, books, and other digital resources. The services include, among others, teaching in information literacy, readers' services, reference services, user education services, photocopying services, circulation services, and more. The purpose of marketing is to increase patrons' awareness, pique their interest, and

persuade them to use the services and materials available through libraries (Saunders, 2020; Patil, and Pradhan, 2014). It is a calculated strategy that aids in building a solid rapport between libraries and their patrons and guarantees that the library is offering services that the community needs and values. The promotion of library resources and services may involve a range of activities, including the development of marketing materials, interaction with the community through outreach activities, workshops, email marketing, relationship-building with stakeholders, and the use of social media platforms and other digital channels to reach out to library users (Uwandu and Osuji, 2022; Yi, 2016).

Marketing library resources and services is crucial for ensuring that library users are aware of the entire range of resources and services available to them as well as for building trust between the library and its patrons. Libraries can enhance the use of their resources and services, forge closer ties with their neighbours, and ultimately fulfil their mandate to provide access to information and chances for lifelong learning by employing efficient marketing techniques (Jones, 2018). University libraries must engage in library marketing to make sure patrons are aware of the materials and services offered. However, the underutilization of resources and services in university libraries in Nigeria can be attributed to inadequate marketing efforts. This has led to a lack of awareness among users regarding the wide range of resources and services available in the library. University libraries in Nigeria may be facing some unique challenges in effectively marketing their resources and services, leading to limited usage by students and faculty. Librarians must play a crucial role in promoting the value of libraries and their resources to address and overcome the challenges hindering the effective marketing of their resources and services. To draw users and meet their demands, university libraries need to implement successful marketing tactics. It is, therefore, on this note that this study examined the challenges of marketing library resources and services in university libraries in Bayelsa State.

Problem. Library marketing is an important aspect of academic library management since it informs users about the various resources and services accessible in the library. Marketing library resources and services have become particularly crucial in university libraries nowadays because of the emergence of other sources of information as a result of technology (Olorunfemi and Ipadeola, 2018). However, university libraries in Nigeria are confronting the issue of underutilization of their resources and services, which can be ascribed to weak marketing efforts. This lack of efficient promotion has resulted in users being ignorant of the broad range of information and services available to them. Librarians have a critical role to play in resolving this dilemma by promoting the available resources and services. They must also handle special problems such as restricted finances, evolving user needs, competition, low user awareness, and time limits. To attract and appeal to their target audience, university libraries need to employ successful marketing tactics. University libraries need to design marketing strategies to overcome these challenges and successfully promote library resources and services to suit the demands of library users. With efficient marketing techniques, university libraries can encourage clients to use the numerous resources and services provided for them.

Previous Literature Review. Two main principles serve as the framework for this literature review: the strategies used in marketing information resources and services, and the challenges of marketing information resources and services to users.

Strategies Used in Marketing Information Resources and Services. For instance, the marketing techniques employed by librarians at the Federal University of Technology in Owerri and the Imo State University in Owerri were studied by Uwandu and Osuji (2022). 62 librarians made up the study's population, which used a survey research design. 51 librarians replied to the online questionnaire that was utilized as the data gathering tool. According to the research, some of the strategies used to promote library resources and

services included user orientation programs, flyers and posters, social media, in-person interactions with the user community, institutional websites, library notice boards, current awareness services, conferences, seminars, and workshops, as well as the selective dissemination of information. The researchers suggested, among other things, that the university libraries management should ensure that the libraries have current, high-quality, and relevant information resources to effectively market library resources and services.

At Abubakar Tafawa-Balewa University in Bauchi, Adamu et al. (2021) conducted a study on marketing library services in academic libraries. The population consisted of 26 academic librarians, and the descriptive survey study design was used. The questionnaire was the tool used to gather the data, while frequency tables, percentages, and mean scores were utilized to analyze the data. The findings showed that the most frequently used strategy is staff friendliness to users, exhibitions, and displays of new items. In light of the findings, it was suggested that libraries be given more resources for development and that training, conferences, and seminars be organized for librarians to teach them how to promote library services. Marketing classes should be added to the library school's curriculum.

In the North-West region of Nigeria, Aderibigbe (2015) looked at information marketing tactics used by federal university libraries. The study was conducted using a qualitative research approach. Through the use of the purposive sample approach, the heads of readers' services at the five federal university libraries under research were selected as study participants. Thematic analysis was utilized to examine the data acquired, which was also collected using the interview approach. The results demonstrate the marketing techniques used to promote information resources and services, including advertisements, displays, exhibits, alerts, utilization of billboards, orientation programs, conferences, and library week for information service delivery.

Challenges of Marketing Information Resources and Services. In Bangladesh's private university libraries, Nowrin et al. (2020) assessed the challenges of library marketing techniques. The study used a standardized questionnaire with both open-ended and closed-ended items to gather data. There were fifteen sample libraries in total (all of which are located in private universities), and of those fifteen, the heads of all fifteen individual private university libraries responded. The study noted several challenges faced by libraries when marketing and providing services, including a lack of infrastructure, a lack of properly qualified employees, a lack of personnel who are capable of making decisions, a lack of funding, and many others.

Mohammed and Ibrahim (2021) researched the challenges of increasing the use of library services in numerous technical universities in Ghana. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection are used in the study. Twenty (20) professional library employees from the chosen universities made up the study's population. The questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The finding shows that several challenges faced by the universities include inadequate facilities, a lack of financing, a lack of staff members with marketing expertise, and a lack of marketing practices. The recommendations include advocating for increased marketing resources, increasing the number of staff members with marketing expertise, and implementing the best marketing practices for successful library promotion initiatives.

Igbokwe et al. (2010) looked at challenges related to marketing library services in a few Nigerian libraries. The random sample method was used for the study. 210 questionnaires were distributed, 186 of which were returned, and 163 of them were deemed to be useful. Data were gathered for discussion using the mean and standard deviation. The majority of respondents indicated that among the challenges in marketing library resources and services were insufficient money, poor infrastructure, a lack of professional training among the available employees, a shortage of workers, and a lack

of library content to market. The research suggested that the Department of Library and Information Science should integrate the marketing of library services into its curriculum.

The literature review covers several studies done on marketing techniques used by academic libraries and the challenges they face in marketing library resources and services. The main conclusions from each research are summarized as follows. Uwandu and Osuji (2022): The marketing strategies used by librarians at the Federal University of Technology in Owerri and the Imo State University in Owerri were the main subjects of this research. The researchers discovered that methods for promoting library resources and services included user orientation sessions, pamphlets and posters, social media, in-person encounters, institutional websites, and current awareness services. To effectively market their services, they advised that libraries should provide up-to-date and relevant information resources. Adamu et al. (2021): The marketing of library services was the subject of research done at Bauchi's Abubakar Tafawa-Balewa University. The research found that exhibits, presentations of new products, and user-friendliness among staff members were the most often used techniques. The researchers recommended that libraries be given more funding for development and that librarians be trained on how to promote library services. Additionally, they suggested adding marketing courses to the curriculum of library schools. Aderibigbe (2015): The study examined federal university libraries in Nigeria's North-West. The findings show that advertising, displays, exhibits, alerts, billboards, orientation programs, conferences, and library weeks were some of the marketing techniques used to promote information resources and services. The research stressed the need for efficient marketing techniques in providing information services.

Nowrin et al. (2020): In the North-West region of Nigeria, this research concentrated on federal university libraries. Advertisements, displays, exhibits, warnings, billboards, orientation programs, conferences, and library weeks were some of the marketing techniques used to promote information resources and services. The research stressed the need for efficient marketing techniques in providing information services. Mohammed and Ibrahim (2021): This research investigated the challenges technical universities in Ghana confront in promoting library services. The results showed that some of the challenges with marketing its resources and services were insufficient facilities, a lack of funding, a lack of marketing-savvy staff members, and a lack of marketing strategies. The study suggested advocating additional marketing resources, expanding the number of staff members with marketing skills, and the use of effective marketing techniques. Igbokwe et al. (2010): The research looked at the challenges preventing some Nigerian libraries from marketing their services. The challenges mentioned were insufficient money, infrastructure, professional staff training, a shortage of employees, and a lack of marketing library resources. The researchers advised library and information science departments to include marketing library services as a course in their curricula.

Overall, these studies highlight the significance of employing effective marketing techniques in libraries to promote their services and resources. They provide ideas for enhancing marketing practices in academic libraries by highlighting various strategies and challenges experienced by academic libraries in diverse circumstances. The academic library requires adequate resources to solve these challenges, including finance, staffing, and better physical spaces that will promote user attraction and retention. Academic libraries must create successful marketing strategies, leverage digital technologies, work with other institutions, and engage with users in order to effectively promote their resources and services. By overcoming these challenges, academic libraries in Nigeria may increase their relevance, attract and retain users, and contribute to the expansion of the academic community.

State of The Art. The study looks into the challenges that university libraries in Bayelsa State, Nigeria encountered, concentrating on the promotion of information

sources and services. This study sheds new light on the particular challenges and opportunities university libraries faced in successfully marketing their information resources and services to meet the needs of a variety of user groups by examining the distinctive context of Bayelsa State. This study adds to the body of knowledge by filling a research gap in the comprehension of marketing practices in university libraries within a particular geographic and socioeconomic context, offering insightful conclusions and suggestions for librarians, policymakers, and researchers in related settings.

Purpose. The main objective of this study is to examine the challenges of marketing library resources and services in university libraries in Bayelsa State Nigeria. The specific objectives are to ascertain the strategies used by university libraries in Bayelsa State in marketing information resources and services and the challenges faced in marketing information resources and services to users.

II. METHODS

The purpose of this research was to investigate the challenges of marketing information resources and services in university libraries in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The existence of several universities and academic institutions in the State justifies the conduct of this investigation. This enables a full awareness of the marketing challenges particular to Bayelsa State and provides for a broad representation of university libraries. Additionally, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, no previous study has been conducted on the challenges of marketing information resources and services specifically in university libraries in Bayelsa State. This emphasizes how important it is for the present study to close this knowledge gap and provide new information and perspectives on the area. The research can provide helpful ideas for enhancing marketing tactics and resolving the identified challenges in this particular context.

The inquiry was conducted using a descriptive survey approach. 52 librarians from four university libraries in Bayelsa State made up the study population, and the 47 librarians who replied to the survey formed the study's sample, yielding a 90% response rate. A total enumeration sample technique was used. Through the participation of librarians from several institutions, the research guarantees a representative sample that may provide insights into the marketing challenges encountered by university libraries in the area. The results are more likely to apply to other situations because of this portrayal. All 52 librarians were included in the research using the complete enumeration sample methodology, which guarantees that the whole population of interest is included. This strategy enables a detailed knowledge of the marketing challenges encountered by university libraries in Bayelsa State since information is gathered from all qualified participants. It gives a thorough picture of the population and removes the possibility of sampling bias. Since data were gathered from the complete population, using a total enumeration sample lowers the requirement for statistical inference and estimate. Compared to sampling techniques that call for choosing a smaller selection of participants, this strategy is more efficient in terms of time and resources. It enables more effective data collecting and analysis. The research can shed light on the unique marketing challenges faced by Bayelsa State by concentrating on the librarians from university libraries there. The results may be used to guide strategies and interventions that are specifically designed to satisfy the special requirements and conditions of university libraries in Bayelsa State.

The tool utilized to gather data was an online questionnaire. Google Forms was used for creating the study's online survey, which was open for replies for one month. A research synopsis, the subject and goals of the study, and a promise of the confidentiality of the respondent's information were all included in the introduction and two additional parts of the questionnaire. Part A sought information on the respondent's demographic

traits, while Part B had two items (research questions) that were intended to elicit data on the subject. To preserve the integrity and credibility of the scientific method and to safeguard people's well-being, the study complied with ethical guidelines for research, which included obtaining participants' informed permission. Two experts in library and information science and research methods subjected the questionnaire to both face and content validity checks to see how the questions were arranged and if they were consistent with the main goals of the study. To make sure the instrument was reliable, a trial testing method was used. Ten respondents were given the questionnaire in the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Library in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, outside the study's sample. The pilot study's data were analyzed to look for internal consistency and reliability, and Cronbach alpha was used to determine the instrument's dependability, yielding a result of 0.87. The data from the research was analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentages, and the questionnaire answers were quantified using a nominal scale. The results of the investigation are shown in Tables 1-3.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study are presented in the following tables with explanations

Table 1.
Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	21	45
Female	26	55
Total	47	100

Source: Research Data, 2023

The result in Table 1 implies that the majority of the respondents under study were female.

Strategies in Marketing Information Resources and Services. The author explains the strategies used by library in marketing information resources and services to authors by the following table.

Table 2.
Strategies Used in Marketing of Information Resources and Services

Strategies	Frequency	Percent (%)
Library orientation	41	87
Library user education	40	85
Using social media platforms	27	57
Exhibitions and displays	25	53
Workshops and seminars	18	38
Email marketing	11	23
Library orientation	41	87
Library user education	40	85

Source: Research Data, 2023

Table 2 reveals that the majority of the respondents 41(87%) agree that library orientation, library user education 40(85%), social media platforms 27(57%), exhibitions and displays 25(53%), workshops and seminars 18(38%), email marketing

11(23%), campaign and outreach programmes 8(17%) were some of the strategies used by university libraries in Bayelsa state in marketing information resources and services to users. However, 5(11%) respondents noted that other strategies not listed in the table were used in marketing library resources and services. This implies that most of the university libraries majorly used library orientation, library user education, social media platforms, and exhibitions and display in the marketing information resources and services to users.

Challenges Faced by University Libraries. The challenges faced by university libraries in marketing information resources and services to users explains by the following table.

Table 3
Challenges in Marketing of Information Resources and Services

Strategies	Frequency	Percent (%)
Poor funding	44	94
Poor Internet connectivity	38	81
Lack of marketing policy	38	81
Lack of a marketing department	37	78
Lack of adequate staff	23	49
Lack of marketing strategies	23	49
Lack of adequate information resources	22	47
Lack of marketing plans	21	45

Source: Research Data, 2023

Table 3 shows that the majority of the librarians 44(94%) agree that poor funding, poor Internet connectivity 38(81%), lack of marketing policy 38(81%), lack of a marketing department 37(78%), lack of adequate staff 23(49%), lack of marketing strategies 23(49%), lack of adequate information resources 22(47%) and lack of marketing plans 21(45%) were the major challenges in marketing information resources and services in university libraries in Bayelsa state. The most notable ones among the challenges are poor funding, poor Internet connectivity, lack of marketing policy, and lack of a marketing department.

Discussion of Research Findings. The study examined the challenges of marketing information resources and services in university libraries in Bayelsa State. The findings of research question one show that a variety of marketing strategies were used to market their information resources and services to users. Library orientation, user education, social media platforms, exhibitions, and presentation are a few of the techniques used by these libraries. These strategies collectively demonstrate the library's efforts to market its information resources and services to users. By employing a diverse range of strategies, the library aims to engage users, raise awareness about available resources, and facilitate users' access to valuable information. This conclusion is in line with the results obtained by Uwandu and Osuji (2022), who discovered that exhibitions and displays, user orientation, publicity, and social media, among others, were some of the strategies used in marketing information resources and services in university libraries.

Finally, the study found that among other things, university libraries had challenges in marketing their information resources and services to users due to insufficient budget, bad Internet access, a lack of marketing policies, and a lack of a marketing department.

These challenges might make learners and instructors less aware of and less likely to use the resources and services that are offered. To address these challenges and better promote the library's offerings, it emphasizes the necessity for improved funding, improved Internet infrastructure, the creation of marketing strategies, and the creation of specialized marketing teams. This conclusion is in line with that of Nowrin et al. (2020), who also found that marketing information resources and services were challenging due to a lack of library infrastructure, a lack of staff who were appropriately qualified, a lack of staff who were capable of making decisions, financial limitations, and a host of other issues.

Research Limitations. The investigation found a few elements in the examined studies that were not present in the current analysis. For instance, it is important to note that, despite research being done on the difficulties of marketing information resources and services in academic libraries, none of them looked at university libraries in Bayelsa State. This study fills a knowledge vacuum in the area of understanding marketing activities, particularly in university libraries within a particular geographic and socioeconomic setting. For librarians, politicians, and researchers working in related environments, the study offers insightful results and recommendations that can be helpful.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study examined the challenges of marketing information resources and services in university libraries in Bayelsa State Nigeria. Based on the study findings, it can be concluded that university libraries in Nigeria's Bayelsa State are aware of the value of promoting their products and services. They are using several techniques, such as social media platforms, exhibits and displays, library orientation, and user education, to reach out to people. Effective marketing initiatives, however, are hampered by issues including limited finance, poor Internet access, a lack of marketing regulations, and a lack of professional marketing teams. Despite these challenges, university libraries in Bayelsa State are working to promote the services and resources they provide. To improve the visibility, accessibility, and usage of library resources and services among users in Bayelsa State, it is essential to address these challenges.

Based on these findings, the researchers recommended that adequate funding should be allocated to university libraries to support their marketing initiatives and ensure the availability of high-quality resources and services. Efforts should be made to improve Internet connectivity within the libraries, enabling seamless access to electronic resources for users. The development of marketing policies and the establishment of dedicated marketing departments can enhance the libraries' ability to strategize, implement, and evaluate marketing activities effectively. By addressing these challenges and implementing the recommended measures, university libraries in Bayelsa State can improve their marketing efforts, enhance user engagement, and maximize the utilization of their resources and services.

Future Work. Although the study offers insightful information on the challenges of marketing information resources and services at university libraries in Bayelsa State, Nigeria, there are several topics that might be further examined in future studies. These topics include user opinions and levels of satisfaction with university libraries' marketing initiatives, the effect of various marketing strategies on the use of library resources and services, and investigation on the incorporation of cutting-edge technologies like artificial intelligence, virtual reality, or augmented reality, among others. Researchers may contribute to an improved understanding of marketing information resources and services in university libraries in Bayelsa State and elsewhere by further exploring these areas and by offering practical suggestions for enhancing marketing techniques in the future.

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