Marketing of library services as determinant for undergraduates patronage in Oghara Polytechnic library Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated marketing of library services as a determinant for undergraduate's patronage in Oghara Polytechnic library in Delta State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design using questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The population of the study consists of 31 library staff at the Oghara polytechnic library. A total of 31 questionnaires were distributed only 25 were retrieved. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics mean and percentage mean score of 2.5 and above. The study revealed that the needs for marketing library and information services in Oghara polytechnic libraries is keeping the clients in touch, informed about resources and services that match their interests, aims at determining the needs and aims at determining the wants and demands of undergraduates. The study shows the current techniques employed in marketing library services as library website, orientation tours and workshops, blogs and podcast, and posters. The study affirmed the extent of undergraduate's patronage as once in week, twice a week and during exams. The study recommended that the library management should utilize social media to market their information resource and services to increase undergraduate's patronage, the library staff should improve their relationships with their users so as to portray a good image of the library to their users.

Keywords: Marketing, Library services, undergraduates, patronage; Polytechnic library

Introduction

Polytechnic libraries are referred to globally as academic libraries. By making information resources available, these libraries are designed to meet the information demands of the institutional community, which includes needs for education, research, and leisure. The academic programs at polytechnics are held together by the libraries at such institutions. The major goal of the polytechnic library, according to Nwalo (2001), is to provide literary support for all of the parent institutions' academic, research, and extension programs. Through reading, research, and study, they provide distinctive library services to undergraduates. Among other things, these libraries would collect and arrange library materials in retrievable formats and establish an appropriate learning environment where staff and students could use a range of these materials and services for study and learning.

In recent times and with the user's statistics available in some libraries, most undergraduate's students do not make use of the library often unless when it is time for their exams. Most of them rely strongly on their mobile phones for downloading and doing other critical assignment and research. In order to effectively market library services to undergraduates and the larger polytechnic community, librarians must take dramatic measures in each of their surroundings. Attracting them and making them aware of the services and resources offered is one of the fundamental strategies for marketing library services to undergraduates. As a result, Yi (2016) employs marketing strategies to communicate the existence and worth of services in order to motivate users to take action (Helinsky, 2008; Webreck Alman, 2007). The goal of the marketing strategy for library and information services is to identify the requirements, desires, and expectations of the target users via the design and more efficient delivery of services that are appropriate for attaining organizational goals and objectives. According to Gupta, Koontz, and Massisimo (2013), marketing library and information services is a well-established subset of

management strategies that recognizes user's desires and requirements and addresses those needs within the organizational budget.

Marketing is about keeping the clients in touch and informed them about resources and services that match their interests. The level of services and resources provided by the polytechnic library to users will greatly determine the extent the polytechnic achieve their goals. Polytechnic libraries can use a variety of marketing tools to publicize their offerings, such as digital media like the library's website, email lists, blogs, and podcasts; print materials like flyers, brochures, and giveaways; events like orientation tours and workshops; and other tools like publications, competitions, displays, direct mail, Web 2.0 applications, and publications (Fisher and Pride, 2006). Aside this, librarians should include marketing of libraries and information services into their daily tasks, which will increase students' patronage of the library.

According to Odunola and Tella (2019), library patronage is the consultation or use of library information resources by users, whether in-person or online. As a result, the term library services patronage refer to the frequent use of library services and information resources by the library's users. According to Onuoha and Subair (2013), assessing a library's patronage is essential for learning if the institution is carrying out its mission and for assisting with service reform, planning, and efficient administration of the institution. Ibrahim and Wada (2022), claim that the number of patronage to a library is a good indicator of how effectively it can support teaching, learning, and research. It is in light of this that this title marketing of library services as a determinant for undergraduates patronage in Oghara Polytechnic library Delta State, Nigeria is imperative.

Statement of the problem

The marketing of library services is just as vital as the services offered by polytechnic libraries in terms of establishing a successful connection with students. Marketing is all about figuring out what users want and then creating products and tactics to meet those demands. It is the efficient execution of all the steps necessary to raise user's happiness by giving them the most value possible, as well as a comprehensive solution for libraries and information centers. The polytechnic library's offers to users might be revitalized via the use of marketing strategies and initiatives. The use of social media platforms like websites, blogs, email, and social media is another instrument that should be taken into consideration for giving the polytechnic libraries life. This would undoubtedly propel the library to new heights and enhance undergraduate patronage.

Patronage of undergraduates in a polytechnic library is the consultation or use of library information resources by users of the library. In order words, patronage is simply the regular utilization of library services for the purpose of learning, reading and research. It has been observed by the researcher that there are research works on marketing of library services in academic libraries. But no work has been done on marketing of library services as a determinant of undergraduate's patronage in Oghara Polytechnic library Delta State, Nigeria. This study is therefore carried out to investigate the need to market library services as it affects undergraduate's patronage in the polytechnic library under study.

The objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to investigate marketing of library services as a determinant for undergraduate's patronage in Oghara Polytechnic library Delta State, Nigeria.

The specific objectives of this study are:

1.   To determine the need for marketing library and information services in Oghara Polytechnic library Delta State, Nigeria

2.   To determine current techniques employed by polytechnic library in marketing of library and information services.

3.   To examine the extent of patronage of undergraduates in Oghara Polytechnic library Delta State, Nigeria

Literature review

The National Policy on Education (2013) acknowledged the importance of polytechnic libraries, sometimes referred to as academic libraries, in the national and state-level growth of education. The policy affirmed the significance of polytechnic libraries in academic endeavors. The primary objective of polytechnic libraries is to help the parent organization accomplish its stated objectives. The polytechnic library's primary duty is to offer its patrons access to information resources for study, leisure, and research. This is accomplished through the process of acquiring stored knowledge in written and visual form, along with its selection, organization, preservation, and distribution. Libraries at polytechnic schools serve as repository for knowledge and learning materials that have been purposefully collected, conserved, and made accessible to students and faculty. (Ogbodo, 2011).

The primary goal of polytechnic education is to prepare professionals who will serve as the human race's labor force (Abdulsalami & Salami, 2013). Because of this, the services provided by polytechnic libraries are specifically designed to meet the requirements of their

clienteles, which includes students, lecturers, technicians, and administrative employees from the institutions. Omekwu and Eruvwe (2014) noted that the range of services provided by polytechnic libraries continues to grow, now also including the purchase of books and other media, reference services, serials control, cataloguing and categorization, and making the materials accessible to information searchers..

The libraries and all of its stakeholders must start constructing information services and resources that would satisfy clients if they are to effectively market library services in the twenty-first century (Horsfall, 2020). Because the library profession is undergoing fast change and a variety of causes are redefining how libraries operate, librarians and other information workers have been compelled to learn about marketing and embrace marketing methods. A growingly important topic for libraries and information centers is the marketing of their resources. The promotion of libraries' and information services is critical for rendering an effective library services. In this information and technology era, recent technology advancements are replacing old institutional-like libraries with new information sources, new sources of information, and new information delivery methods. Libraries are under more and more pressure to mobilize their resources and become self-sufficient. The chance to test how they can deliver effective and efficient services to their people online is provided by marketing. Aderibigbe and Farouk (2017) state that among the methods to create effective marketing of library services in academic libraries are advertising and public relations methods, forwarding of new information on the notice board, improving the perception of libraries, using users orientation as a tactic, creating training programs, advertising in print media or directories, sending out newsletters, flyers, and leaflets, word of mouth endorsement, as well as personal sales by the librarian.

In his study, Madhusudan (2008) discloses that the goal of marketing is to identify the client base, ascertain their requirements, desires, and requests, and then satisfy them by providing the proper goods and services. User pleasure is the major priority. In India, the promotion of information resources, the creation of information demand, maximizing the use of information, improving the reputation and status of libraries and professionals, and the reduction of budgets and increase in the cost of resources like journals and databases make marketing of libraries and information services necessary. Sharma, Ajaykumar and Bhardwaj, Seema (2009) argue that adopting different market research methodologies, such as surveys that concentrate on user groups and analysis of proposals, can help to better understand user's demands and promote the services that are already offered. The demands of the user may be understood by librarians, who can then build the right services and facilities to suit those needs. New opportunities for selling information products and services have emerged as a result of budget cuts, rising resource costs, and the development of information communication technology.

According to Chu and Du (2013), social media platforms enable users to create connections between library patrons and remix library services and goods to make them more widely known. In order to improve libraries and offer information services, tools like Facebook, LinkedIn, Blog, and Twitter are being utilized to build relationships, connections, and knowledge exchange with user groups. Many academic libraries were using social networking sites, which were thought to assist advertise library services and engage with students. However, the implementation of these sites by library staff was found to be challenged by limited time and perceived inadequacy of the staff to keep pace with the development of technology.

The services offered to patrons are one aspect of a library that could increase library use. The degree or level of using the library for research is referred to as library patronage. Quality

library services and sufficient information resources, according to Namugera (2017), are insufficient to draw users in the digital world. The survey found that most students at Makerere University in Uganda rarely utilize the academic library because they are unaware of the resources and services it offers. This is supported by Echezona and Chigbu (2018), who concurred that marketing techniques are some of the best ways to increase library use in Nigeria. Despite the fact that marketing is acknowledged as a useful tactic to increase library attendance, existing research indicates that some librarians still have unfavorable opinions regarding marketing. (Azuka and Sebastian,2015, Akporhonor 2020).

This inability of academic libraries to achieve maximum patronage has also been reported by researchers such as Oyewumi, Oladapo, and Adegun, (2014); Odunola and Tella, (2019); as well as Usuka, Nwachukwu, and Nwachukwu (2019). This highlights the need to find efficient strategies to boost library patronage. In a somewhat related study, Folorunso and Njoku (2016) said that University of Ibadan students exclusively use the library during exam times and seldom use it at other times. This demonstrates another aspect of library use, whereby the library is the final resort for the in-depth research necessary to pass an exam. It indicates that the students are satisfied to finish assignments and term papers by using readily available information sources for other academic goals. Therefore, it is possible that the high patronage reported by Tseh (2021) and the low patronage reported in this study and others like it are due to the library's effective marketing of all of its services, which has helped students properly understand the value of the library. This was why research into marketing initiatives intended to increase library patronage is so important.

Methodology

The study used a questionnaire as its primary data collecting tool and employed a descriptive survey research methodology. 31 library employees from the Oghara Polytechnic Library make up the study's population. Only 25 out of the 31 surveys that were issued were collected. Using descriptive statistics, the mean and percentage of the data were calculated. A mean score of 2.5 or above and a percentage score of 50% were taken into consideration.

Table 1
Need for marketing library and information services

Items	SA	A	D	SD	-X	Decision
Keeping the clients in touch	12	11	1	1	3.3	Accepted
Informed about resources and services that match their interests	12	12	0	1	3.4	Accepted
Aims at determining the needs	9	11	3	2	3.0	Accepted
Aims at determining the wants and demands	16	7	1	1	3.5	Accepted

Table 1 above identified four (4) needs for marketing library and information services in Oghara polytechnic libraries as keeping the clients in touch (3.), informed about resources and services that match their interests, (3.4), aims at determining the needs (3.0) and aims at determining the wants and demands of undergraduates (3.5) respectively. The result is linked to Margam, Madhusudan (2008) in his study who reveals that the marketing aims to identify the client base, determine their wants, needs and demands and fulfilling them by delivering the appropriate products and services.

Table 2
Current techniques employed in marketing of library services

Items	SA	A	D	SD	-X	Decision
Library's Website	13	11	0	1	3.5	Accepted
Orientation tours and workshops	12	9	2	2	3.4	Accepted
Blogs and podcasts	8	8	4	5	2.7	Accepted
Posters	11	7	6	1	3.1	Accepted

Table 2 shows the current techniques employed in marketing library services as follows: library website (3.5), orientation tours and workshops (3.4), blogs and podcast (2.7) and posters (3.1). This is in line with Chu, and Du, (2013) who observes that social media applications help their users to acquire interconnections among the library members and remix the library services and products to brand them visible in a wider way.

Table 3
Extent of patronage of undergraduates in Oghara Polytechnic library

Items	VHE	HE	LE	NE	-X	Decision
Frequently	5	6	10	4	2.4	Rejected
Once in week	11	8	5	1	3.1	Accepted
Twice a week	6	5	11	3	2.5	Accepted
During exams	13	11	1	0	3.4	Accepted

Table 3 above shows the extent of undergraduate's patronage in Oghara Polytechnic library as frequency (3.4), once in week (3.1), twice a week (2.5) and during exams (3.4). This result implies that undergraduates do not visit the library frequently. They prefer visiting the library during examinations. These was supported by Folorunso and Njoku (2016) who reported that students at the University of Ibadan only patronize the library during examination periods

and rarely visit the library any other time. This shows another dimension of library patronage in which the library is the last resort for the in-depth study required to pass an examination.

Conclusion

The study shows the needs for marketing library and information services in Oghara polytechnic library as keeping the clients in touch, informed about resources and services that match their interests, aims at determining the needs and aims at determining the wants and demands of undergraduates. The study further affirmed that marketing of library services using library website, orientation tours and workshops, blogs and podcast and posters have significant influence on of undergraduate's patronage in Oghara polytechnic. Also, it was also deduced from the study that most undergraduates prefer making using of the library during examination period rather than frequently which is not good enough. For improved patronage of polytechnic libraries, librarians must regularly reformulate and manoeuvre through aggressive market advantage in positioning themselves for improved conspicuousness, patronage, better users' satisfaction, understanding and retention. This will also encourage supports from the parent institution.

Recommendations

In view of this, the following recommendations were made;

1. To improve undergraduate patronage, library administration should use social media to promote their information resource and services.

2. The library personnel should strengthen their bonds with patrons in order to provide them a positive impression of the institution.

3.   By hosting seminars and workshops to promote her services to the general public, the library could engage in greater public relations for its resources and offerings. They should also encourage undergraduates to use the library regularly rather than just before exams.

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