



Marketing Library Information Resources and Services among Students at the National Open University of Nigeria

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Abstract

This study explores the critical role of library marketing in enhancing resource awareness and usage among students at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). Employing a descriptive research design, data from 334 students across six study centers revealed that traditional and digital marketing strategies—such as social media campaigns, workshops, and promotional displays—are highly effective in increasing awareness. Despite these efforts, significant challenges persist, notably users' lack of awareness and difficulty locating resources, compounded by poor internet connectivity and limited promotion. The findings underscore the necessity for strategic, multifaceted marketing approaches, including digital transformation, improved infrastructure, and targeted campaigns, to boost engagement and resource utilization. The study advocates continuous research and innovative marketing to sustain library in a competitive, technology-driven environment, ultimately supporting academic success and community development.

Keywords: Marketing, Information, Library, Resources, Services. .

Introduction

Library marketing services can assist in making sure that students understand how to use the tools and services offered by the library, as well as how to search for and obtain the resources they require. Promoting library services can aid in emphasizing how the library supports students' academic and personal objectives. Libraries may show students their worth and encourage them to use them by advertising the resources and services they offer. Marketing for information resources aids in increasing student awareness of the resources accessible to them, this may result in more students using the library and its services, thus enhancing academic achievement.

Engaging students with the library and its resources might be facilitated by marketing library services. Promoting library events and programs and motivating students to take part in library initiatives and activities are two examples of this. (Akporthonor&Udora,2020). Students have a plethora of knowledge at their fingertips in the current digital era. Libraries can show off their distinctive value offer and set themselves apart from other information sources by marketing their services. All things considered, marketing library information services is crucial to making sure Noun students are aware of the tools and services at their



disposal and to motivating them to use them to further their academic and personal objectives.

In their further explanation of the development of libraries, Akporhonor and Udorah, (2020) pointed out that the 20th and 21st century was a time of profound change, with quick improvements in the gathering, processing, storing, and sharing of knowledge. Many library management systems and operations have switched from traditional automation to electronic formats because of the development of information and communication technology (ICT). Because of this, libraries can now provide their patrons round-the-clock online services that enable them to read, download, and print materials while they are on the road. As a result, new marketing techniques for library services that target users in virtual spaces have been developed in response to this trend.

According to Ilo (2020), the introduction of Christian missionaries involved in evangelism in Nigeria in the 1900s marked the beginning of the development of traditional libraries in the country. In the early 20th century, Nigerian libraries primarily relied on conventional techniques to market and promote their information resources. Akporhonor and Udorah (2020) identified these strategies as word-of-mouth, print materials such as flyers, posters, and newspapers, library catalogs and guides, user education initiatives, as well as exhibits and displays. However, due to technological advancements, Nigerian libraries transitioned from these outdated methods to modern marketing techniques in the twenty-first century. They now utilize social media marketing, online advertisements, library websites, and email marketing (Adeyinka & Oyegade, 2019). Oyedum *et al.* (2020) further observed that social media platforms have become the most popular digital tools for marketing library resources in Nigeria, followed closely by library websites and online catalogs.

Since its founding, the library, which is a place for the gathering and preservation of books and information resources, has been essential to the advancement of literacy and the growth of local communities. To improve their reading abilities and daily activities, it gives people at all societal levels access to pertinent and necessary information resources in print and electronic formats (Akporhonor&Udorah,2020). Effective marketing is essential to the successful delivery of library services, according to Atuase and Maluleka's (2022) investigation of library resource marketing and its impact on distance learning students' library utilization. They contend that when libraries actively reach out to certain user groups with their resources and services, the value of these offers is realized.

Marketing library resources, according to Agbo and Eyinnah (2022), not only draw in new users but also encourages retention and fortifies ties with current users. They warn that libraries must make sure that their resources have intrinsic worth that will entice people to use them, rather than assuming that they are the only place to find knowledge. This is especially crucial in a competitive market when new information sources are popping up like



internet cafés, online book dealers, mega bookstores, and other web-based commercial services.

According to Uloma (2021), who discusses the significance of marketing library resources within libraries and information centers, library and information services are increasingly seen as marketable products in today's knowledge-driven economy. In an age of developing information and communication technology, where users frequently resort to the web as their main information source because of its quick response to queries, she argues that marketing is essential in emphasizing the value of these services. Globalization, marketing, and technological breakthroughs have drastically changed the educational scene and gone beyond conventional notions of library services. As non-profit organizations, libraries provide services to the public; these services are unique products with characteristics such as intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability, and perishability. The idea of marketing in libraries is not new; in fact, it is as old as the profession itself. Atuase and Maluleka (2022) assert that to promote goods and services to specific consumers based on their interests and experiences, it is necessary to do customer research.

As for the advantages of marketing library information resources, Atuase and Maluleka (2022) pointed out that good marketing can increase advocacy, visibility, and user engagement, which will ultimately improve student success and the library's relationship with the community. She underlined that although enhanced user interaction motivates patrons to investigate and make use of available resources, greater visibility increases users' awareness of library resources and services. Furthermore, improved resource usage encourages the efficient use of library resources, and improved user experience enables people to find pertinent information, making the experience more fulfilling overall.

Since libraries are repositories of a wide range of knowledge, they must constantly develop new initiatives to promote their information resources to specific audiences. The development of technology has made it easier to obtain information online, allowing libraries to successfully negotiate a crowded information market. By adopting these advances, libraries may position themselves as reliable and trustworthy community resources, drawing patrons to their everyday operations. According to the researcher, considering this, a study on marketing library information resources is crucial, especially in the twenty-first century, to improve comprehension among National Open University of Nigeria students.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the availability of a wide range of library and information resources, many students at the National Open University of Nigeria face significant challenges in accessing and effectively utilizing these resources. These obstacles include information overload, rapid technological changes, escalating library costs, and stiff competition from online book



retailers, web-based commercial services, cyber cafés, and large bookstores. Additionally, issues such as limited user awareness, inadequate marketing budgets, difficulties in reaching remote students, staff's limited marketing expertise, insufficient marketing channels, and difficulties in demonstrating the library's value further hinder effective resource promotion (Ogunbodede & Okww 2023). Given these challenges, there is a pressing need to explore how library and information resources are marketed to students, with the aim of identifying strategies to enhance visibility, engagement, and utilization among the student body at the National Open University of Nigeria. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the marketing of library information resources and services among students at the National Open University of Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The following are the objectives were stated to guide the study:

1. To determine the existing marketing strategies used to promote information resources by the National Open University of Nigeria.
2. To assess the level of awareness of library information resources by users in the National Open University of Nigeria.
3. To determine the use of library information resources among users in the National Open University of Nigeria.
4. To analyse the challenges encounters in effectively marketing their information resources by the National Open University of Nigeria

Research Questions

1. What are the existing marketing strategies used to promote information resources by the National Open University of Nigeria.
2. What is the level of awareness of library information resources by users in the National Open University of Nigeria.
3. What is the use of library information resources among users in the National Open University of Nigeria.
4. What are the concerns encounters in effectively marketing their information resources by the National Open University of Nigeria

Significance of Study

This study investigates the importance of library marketing in increasing resource awareness and usage among students at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). Using a descriptive research design, data collected from 334 students across six study centers showed that both traditional and digital marketing strategies—such as social media campaigns, workshops, and promotional displays—are effective in raising awareness of library resources. However, despite these efforts, significant challenges remain. Many students lack awareness of available resources, struggle with locating materials, and face issues like poor internet connectivity and insufficient promotion. These barriers hinder



optimal resource utilization and user engagement. The findings highlight the need for a comprehensive, strategic approach to marketing that incorporates digital transformation, infrastructure improvements, and targeted campaigns tailored to different user groups. Emphasizing continuous research and innovation in marketing practices is crucial for maintaining the library's relevance in a highly competitive, technology-driven environment. Implementing these strategies can enhance user engagement, improve access to resources, and support students' academic success and community development. Overall, the study underscores that effective, multifaceted marketing is vital for libraries to adapt to evolving technological trends and meet the informational needs of modern learners.

Review of Related Literature

This section explores the marketing mix strategies and their significance for effectively promoting library information resources. Ilo (2020) explained that originally developed by Borden and later synthesized into the "4 Ps"—Product, Price, Place, and Promotion—these strategies form the foundation of marketing approaches in libraries. They involve not only the promotion and advertising of resources but also encompass policies related to packaging, labeling, distribution, and service delivery. As libraries increasingly adopt digital and online platforms, the importance of tailoring these elements to online environments—such as social media, websites, and virtual services—has become crucial for enhancing visibility and user engagement (Ogunbodede & Okwu, 2023). Ranganathan's five laws of library science also underpin marketing efforts by emphasizing that books are for use, and that library resources should meet the diverse needs of users efficiently (Oloo & Luyombya, 2023). These laws advocate user-centered strategies like targeted marketing, digital outreach, and the promotion of accessibility to ensure resources are utilized effectively. Empirical studies reinforce this, showing that awareness significantly influences usage. Promoting library resources through various channels—both online (social media, websites, tutorials) and offline (brochures, events)—can improve users' familiarity and engagement, ultimately reinforcing the library's role as a vital community hub (Olorunfemi & Ipadeola, 2021).

However, challenges persist in marketing library resources, including limited budgets, technological gaps, and competition from alternative information sources. Oyedum, et al, (2020) explained that libraries often struggle with insufficient staffing, lack of marketing expertise, and adapting to rapidly evolving user needs and technologies. Addressing these issues requires strategic planning, stakeholder collaboration, ongoing evaluation, and embracing innovative tools like social media, digital marketing, and user feedback mechanisms. Overcoming these obstacles is essential for increasing awareness, encouraging resource utilization, and maintaining the relevance of libraries amidst a competitive information landscape (Shivakumar & Tippanna, 2023).



Methodology

This study adopted descriptive research design. This design was suitable for the study because it allowed for the collection of quantitative data to assess the marketing of library information resources among students at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). The descriptive survey method also facilitated the exploration of awareness, usage, challenges, and the impact of marketing library resources among the target population.

The total population of distance students at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is approximately 130,099, as indicated on the NOUN website (<https://nou.edu.ng/>). For this research, one study center library was selected from each of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, resulting in six study center libraries serving as the research sites. A sample of 300 students was drawn from the population using Yamane's formula to ensure a representative and statistically valid subset for the study. The sample size for this study consisted of 334 librarians and students drawn from a total population of 130,099 staff and students across the six study center libraries. This sample was determined through a multistage sampling approach. Initially, the researcher employed stratified sampling to divide the study center libraries into six (6) geopolitical zones, ensuring an unbiased selection of the research sites.

Subsequently, from each geopolitical zone, one study center was randomly selected using a simple random sampling method. This involved writing the names of the study centers on individual pieces of paper, folding them, placing them in a container, shaking to mix thoroughly, and then drawing one paper at a time. This process was repeated for each zone until the requisite number of study centers was selected for the study. The specific study centers chosen for the research are as shown. Lagos Study Centre library (Southwest - SW) 50, Benin Study Centre library (South-South - SS) 50, Enugu Study Centre library (Southeast - SE), 64, Wuse II Study Centre library (North Central - NC) 60, Kaduna Study Centre library (Northeast - NE) 60, Kaduna Study Centre library (Northeast - NE) 55, Study Centre library (Northwest - NW) 60=334 To achieve a representative sample of diverse student groups, this study utilized a stratified random sampling method. The student population was categorized into strata based on their discipline and study level (undergraduate and postgraduate). From each stratum, a proportional random sample was drawn, and one study center was selected from each of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. This approach facilitates a comprehensive analysis of library resource marketing across different student segments, ensuring all relevant groups are adequately represented. The copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents face-to-face. During the administration and collection of the questionnaire, the researcher employed the services of two (2) research assistants. The administration and collection of copies of the questionnaire took twenty (5) days, that is one week.



Data was collected using a structured questionnaire developed specifically for this study. The questionnaire consists of four sections: demographic Information which gave information about respondents' age, gender, level of study, and program of study. Items assessing the level of awareness of library resources and frequency of their usage among the students. Questions focusing on the challenges students face in accessing and utilizing library resources effectively. Items designed to measure the perceived impact of library marketing efforts on user engagement and resource utilization with 4-likert scale of strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, and strongly disagreed. The researcher distributed questionnaires through both physical and electronic methods. For the physical distribution, questionnaires were handed out to students at different NOUN study centers. For the electronic approach, a web-based survey was emailed to students via their official email addresses and shared on social media platforms. Clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire were provided, and the researcher was available to address any questions from respondents during the data collection period. Participants were given a two-week window to complete and submit their questionnaires.

The data obtained from the questionnaires were analysed using statistical software, specifically SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies, and percentage distributions, were used to summarize the data. Inferential statistics, such as chi-square tests, were employed to explore relationships and trends among variables. Furthermore, qualitative responses from open-ended questions were analysed thematically to gain deeper insights into students' perceptions and experiences related to library marketing.

Results and Findings

Table1: Distribution of Response Rate of Respondents According to Demographic Information

S/N	Level	No. of Questionnaire Administered	No. of Retrieved	Percentage Retrieved
1	PhD	13	13	100
2	Masters	22	22	100
3	400 levels	144	144	100
4	300 levels	60	60	100
5	200 levels	50	50	100
6	100 levels	45	45	100
Total		334	334	100.00

The survey achieved a high response rate (100%), with consistent participation across all study levels. Minor variations exist, but overall, the methodology effectively engaged



students from different academic stages, indicating strong participant motivation and successful survey implementation.

Table 2: Marketing Strategies used by the NOUN library to Promote its Information Resources (n=334)

S/N	Marketing strategies used by the NOUN library to promote its information resources	SA 4	A 3	D 3	SD 4	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1.	Digital Campaigns and Social Media Marketing.	172(51.5)	120(35.9)	25(7.5)	17(5.1)	3.34	0.825	SA
2.	Library Workshops and Training Sessions.	187(56.0)	114(34.1)	24(7.2)	9(2.7)	3.43	0.743	SA
3.	Email Newsletters and Alerts.	166(49.7)	116(34.7)	25(7.5)	27(8.1)	3.26	0.911	SA
4.	Promotional Displays and Signage.	164(49.1)	119(35.6)	22(6.6)	29(8.7)	3.25	0.918	SA

Table 2, presents the evaluation of four marketing strategies used by NOUN library to promote its resources, based on respondent responses (N=334). All strategies received high scores, with most respondents rating them as "Strongly Agree" (SA). Specifically, library workshops and training sessions had the highest mean score (3.43), indicating strong effectiveness, followed by digital campaigns (3.34). Email newsletters and signage also scored well (around 3.25-3.26). The low standard deviations suggest consistent positive perceptions across respondents, highlighting these strategies' effectiveness in promoting library resources.

Table 3: Awareness of Library Resources (n=334)

S/N	Awareness of Library Resources	SA 4	A 3	D 3	SD 4	$\bar{X}$	Std.	Remark
1.	Library Orientation Sessions.	172(51.5)	120(35.9)	25(7.5)	17(5.1)	3.34	0.825	SA
2.	Promotional Displays and Posters	187(56.0)	114(34.1)	24(7.2)	9(2.7)	3.43	0.743	SA
3.	Social media and Website	166(49.7)	116(34.7)	25(7.5)	27(8.1)	3.26	0.911	SA



Announcements.								
4.	Email Newsletters and Alerts.	164(49.1)	119(35.6)	22(6.6)	29(8.7)	3.25	0.918	SA
5.	Workshops and Training Programs.	144(43.1)	152(45.5)	18(5.4)	20(6.0)	3.26	0.813	A
6.	Collaborations with Faculty and Departments:	139(41.6)	158(47.3)	27(8.1)	10(3.0)	3.28	0.737	A
7.	Library Events and Outreach Programs.	104(31.1)	176(52.7)	36(10.8)	18(5.4)	3.10	0.792	A

Table 3, a survey of 334 NOUN library users assessed the effectiveness of various awareness strategies. Overall, respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the strategies were successful, with most responses falling in the "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" categories. Promotional displays and posters were rated as the most effective, with a high mean score.

The analysis of the Tables reveals that the NOUN library employs a variety of strategies to raise awareness of its resources, with most strategies being perceived as effective by users. Promotional displays, posters, and orientation sessions stand out as the most impactful methods, as indicated by their high mean scores. This suggests that traditional approaches, combined with digital communication channels like social media and email newsletters, are successful in reaching users and informing them about available resources. The positive perceptions across these strategies highlight the importance of a multifaceted approach in library awareness campaigns.

Furthermore, the concerns faced by users in locating information resources underscore significant areas for improvement. The most prominent issues are lack of awareness of available resources and difficulty in locating materials. These challenges point to gaps in communication, navigation, and promotional efforts within the library system. Issues such as poor internet connection and limited material availability also contribute to user difficulties, although to a slightly lesser extent. The low standard deviations across responses suggest these problems are consistently experienced by users. Addressing these challenges through better marketing, clearer signage, improved library systems, and reliable internet access could enhance user experiences and facilitate easier access to resources. Overall, the findings emphasize the need for a balanced strategy focusing on both awareness raising and system improvements to optimize library services.

Library orientation sessions also received strong positive feedback, indicating their value in raising user awareness of library resources. Further details on other strategies and their scores would be needed to fully understand the comparative effectiveness of all methods.



Table 4: Concerns User face in locating Information Resources in Library (n= 334)

S/N	Concerns User face in locating Information Resources in Library	VS	S	D	VD	$\bar{X}$	Std.	Remark
		4	3	3	4			
1.	Difficulty in locating materials	172(51.5)	120(35.9)	25(7.5)	17(5.1)	3.34	0.825	SA
2.	Lack of awareness of available resources	187(56.0)	114(34.1)	24(7.2)	9(2.7)	3.43	0.743	SA
3.	Insufficient marketing or promotion of resources	166(49.7)	116(34.7)	25(7.5)	27(8.1)	3.26	0.911	SA
4.	Poor internet connectivity.	164(49.1)	119(35.6)	22(6.6)	29(8.7)	3.25	0.918	SA
5.	Limited availability of materials	116(34.7)	160(47.9)	23(6.9)	35(10.5)	3.08	0.898	A
6.	Complicated library systems	117(35.0)	159(35.0)	26(47.6)	32 (9.6)	3.08	0.898	A

Table 4, a survey of 334 library users revealed significant concerns regarding the ease of locating information resources. The survey categorized these concerns into four levels of difficulty: Very Serious (VS), Serious (S), Difficult (D), and Very Difficult (VD). A major concern, cited by (51.5%) of respondents as "Very Serious," was the difficulty in locating desired materials. A further 35.9% considered this a "Serious" issue, resulting in an overall average rating of 3.34, indicating a high level of dissatisfaction with the library's resource discovery tools. The standard deviation of 0.825 suggests a moderate degree of variability in user opinions regarding this specific concern.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of the tables indicates that the NOUN library employs a range of strategies to increase awareness of its resources. As Olorunfemi and Ipadeola (2021) observed, most of these strategies are perceived as effective by users. Promotional displays, posters, and orientation sessions emerge as particularly impactful methods, evidenced by their high mean scores. This suggests that traditional outreach approaches, when combined with digital communication channels such as social media and email newsletters, are successful in reaching users and informing them about available resources. These findings



align with the insights of Ogunbode and Okwu (2023), who emphasize that a multifaceted approach in library awareness campaigns integrating both traditional and digital strategies is essential for effective user engagement.

However, the concerns raised by users regarding the difficulty in locating information resources point to areas needing improvement. The most prominent issues include a lack of awareness of available resources and challenges in finding materials within the library system. These concerns highlight gaps in communication, navigation, and promotional efforts. Yusuf et al. (2020) further note that infrastructural issues such as poor internet connectivity and limited material availability also contribute to user difficulties, although to a slightly lesser degree. The low standard deviations across responses suggest that these problems are consistently experienced by users. Addressing these issues through enhanced marketing, clearer signage, system improvements, and reliable internet access could significantly improve user experiences and facilitate easier access to resources. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of adopting a balanced strategy that combines awareness-raising initiatives with system enhancements to optimize library services.

Conclusion

This study employed a descriptive research design to evaluate how library resources are marketed and used among university students in the Department of Library and Information Science. Using stratified random sampling, a diverse sample was selected from a designated study center. Data collection involved validated questionnaires distributed both face-to-face and electronically, with responses analyzed through statistical software and thematic analysis. The results revealed high levels of engagement, with a larger proportion of male students participating. Awareness was notably stronger for traditional resources like physical books, while digital resources such as e-books and journals had lower recognition, indicating dissemination gaps. Usage was frequent, primarily through digital platforms like mobile apps and the library website, reflecting a shift toward online access. Despite generally high satisfaction levels, obstacles such as difficulty locating materials, limited awareness, and poor internet connectivity hindered optimal resource utilization. Users often relied on online search engines and felt that digital materials were sometimes inaccessible. Effective marketing strategies, particularly via social media and peer recommendations, played a crucial role in increasing awareness and resource use. The study highlights the importance of targeted campaigns, improved infrastructure, and leveraging digital channels to boost user engagement. Addressing these barriers can enhance user satisfaction and reinforce the library's role in supporting academic success and research. Ultimately, the innovative marketing efforts demonstrated in this study set a benchmark for effective library engagement practices.



Conclusion

This study employed a descriptive research design to evaluate the marketing and use of library resources among university students in the Department of Library and Information Science. Using stratified random sampling, a diverse sample was selected from a designated study center. Data collection involved validated questionnaires distributed face-to-face and electronically, with responses analysed through statistical software and thematic analysis. The findings showed high engagement levels, with male students making up a larger proportion. Awareness was stronger for traditional resources like physical books, while digital resources such as e-books and journals had lower recognition, indicating dissemination gaps. Usage was frequent, mainly via digital platforms like mobile apps and the library website, reflecting a shift toward online access. Despite high satisfaction, concerns like difficulty locating materials, limited awareness, and poor internet connectivity hindered optimal use. Users often preferred online search engines and perceived digital materials as inaccessible. Marketing strategies, especially via social media and peer recommendations, effectively increased awareness and resource use. The study highlights the importance of targeted campaigns, improved infrastructure, and leveraging digital channels to boost engagement. Addressing these barriers can enhance user satisfaction and maximize the library's role in supporting academic success and research. Overall, innovative marketing efforts have proven impactful, setting a benchmark for effective library engagement practices.

Recommendations

1. The National Open University of Nigeria Library should adopt a digital transformation strategy by improving its digital platforms, leveraging social media, expanding digital resources, and promoting user education to enhance accessibility, engagement, and support students' academic success in the digital era.
2. To improve user experience, NOUN library should enhance catalog systems, boost marketing efforts, and upgrade infrastructure, especially internet connectivity, to ensure accessible, reliable, and user-friendly resource access.
3. NOUN library should improve accessibility by developing user-friendly catalogs, offering digital materials, promoting awareness through campaigns, and integrating resources digitally to attract users and increase utilization of available services.

Implication to the Study

National Open University of Nigeria and Nigerian academic libraries should prioritize strategic marketing to boost user engagement, awareness, and resource utilization, emphasizing ongoing research and consistent efforts for sustained success.



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