MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING LIBRARY PATRONAGE: A STUDY OF FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA

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Keywords: *Marketing,* *Library* *Services,* *Patronage,* *Polytechnic* *Libraries*	***Abstract:*** *This study explored marketing strategies for enhancing library patronage: a study of federal polytechnic libraries in South-East, Nigeria. Five (5) research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey research method was used for the study. The population of the study is 102 consisting of twenty six (26) librarians and seventy six (76) library users. No sampling was made for the study. A questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection, while observation checklist was used to ascertain available facilities for marketing library services. A structured interview was also used for librarians to determine the extent of marketing library services in the libraries. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the research questions. Qualitative analysis was adopted in analysing data gotten from the interview schedule. The findings of the study revealed that library services are marketed to a high extent (2.72) in federal polytechnic libraries in South-East, Nigeria. Display stand, display rack, online database, information leaflet, and magazine are the available facilities used in marketing library services. Exhibitions, display of new arrivals, provision of suggestion boxes amongst others are the methods used for marketing library services (3.25) in federal polytechnic libraries in South-East, Nigeria. Users utilize (2.96) the marketed library services in federal polytechnic libraries in South-East, Nigeria. The cluster mean (3.11) shows that the librarians agree that lack of effective communication between librarians and users, and inadequate funding constituted the major challenges affecting marketing library services for enhancing library patronage in federal polytechnic libraries in South-East, Nigeria*

Introduction

Polytechnic libraries, often referred to as academic libraries, play unequivocal role in polytechnic education. They are established in alignment with the vision and mission of polytechnics and the academic programs they offer. Therefore, it is clear that polytechnic libraries are an integral part of the polytechnic framework, providing essential information services that support and enhance the intellectual pursuits of their parent institutions. To fulfill this important role, polytechnic libraries must focus on delivering qualitative library services to their users to encourage patronage. This is why Nkiko, Idigbyen-Ose, and Segun-Adeniran (2015) noted that the connection between effective teaching, learning, and research activities in polytechnic libraries is linked to the quality of library services provided to users.

Library services facilitate prompt access to information resources. As highlighted by Webology (2018), libraries are tasked with providing services that cater to the information, educational, research, recreational, and cultural needs of both individual users and the institutional community. These services as provided are available in both print and non-print formats. According to Omekwu and Eruvwe (2014), the scope of services in polytechnic libraries is broadening to include the acquisition of books and various media, reference services, serials management, cataloguing, and classification, all aimed at facilitating user access to information. Additional services identified by Umoh (2017) include technical services, circulation services, current awareness services, reprographic services, extension services, and inter-library cooperation. To optimize the utilization of these services, polytechnic libraries must adopt strategies to effectively market the diverse range of services they provide to their users.

Marketing library services involves the promotion and advertisement of information products and services. Effective marketing enhances the visibility of these service offerings to users, particularly in a landscape where libraries are no longer the sole providers of information services. Adekunmisi (2013) emphasized that libraries must not be perceived as the exclusive information service providers; rather, they must compete with a variety of emerging service providers to maintain their relevance. These competitors include large bookstores, online book retailers, information consultants, internet service providers, free web access platforms, social media, and individual users, all of whom are poised to market similar information products and services to potential users if libraries do not engage in effective marketing strategies. Nwosu (2010) contended that marketing is essential in both the present and future contexts, particularly due to insufficient government funding for libraries. Consequently, libraries must invest in their information resources and services to ensure their sustainability. To accomplish this, it is

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imperative for libraries to incorporate marketing strategies into their management practices. Adegoke (2015) identified several of these strategies to include exhibition and display of new arrivals, selective dissemination of information (SDI), the use of billboards, the organization of user orientation sessions, and the provision of complaint and suggestion boxes. When these marketing strategies are effectively implemented, particularly in polytechnic libraries, users become more aware of the library's value, the support it can provide, and its available holdings, thereby fostering a greater understanding of the library's role in serving their needs.

South-East zone of Nigeria has four federal polytechnics with their libraries, namely: Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Uwana, Ebonyi State; Federal Polytechnic, Nekede, Imo State; Federal polytechnic, Oko, Anambra State; and Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu. These libraries supplement the teaching, learning and research activities that go on in their various institutions. The frequency of patronage by users of federal polytechnic libraries in South-East, Nigeria is experiencing a significant decline. Users increasingly turn to alternative information service providers to satisfy their learning and research needs. Marketing of library services appears to be inadequately carried out in most federal polytechnic libraries in South-East, Nigeria because of funding. The problem of poor funding is exacerbated by the fact that library administrators does not always have a timely and consistent budget for management of polytechnic libraries not to talk of allocating a budget for marketing library services. However, several resources and services available in federal polytechnic libraries in South-East, Nigeria are untapped, hence the need for the study.

Statement of the Problem

Libraries have not effectively marketed their information services to users, leading to a significant decline in patronage. This decline has hindered users' awareness of the information resources and services available within the library, and this has negatively affected the quality of teaching, learning and research activities. When utilized effectively, these information services can provide substantial support to users in addressing their specific information need promoting life-long learning.

While research has been conducted on marketing of library services in both university and public libraries, there is a notable lack of studies focusing on marketing strategies for enhancing library patronage in federal polytechnic libraries. Therefore it became imperative and timely to carry out an investigation to ascertain the state of marking strategies for enhancing library patronage in federal polytechnic libraries in South-East, Nigeria. The problem of this study in question form is: to what extent are library services marketed for enhanced library patronage in federal polytechnic libraries in South-East, Nigeria?

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Purpose of the Study

Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. Extent library services are marketed for enhanced library patronage in the libraries;
2. Facilities available for marketing library services for enhanced library patronage in the libraries
3. Strategies used for marketing library services for enhanced library patronage in the libraries;
4. Extent to which users utilize the marketed library services for enhanced library patronage in the libraries;
5. challenges affecting marketing of library services for enhanced library patronage in the libraries;

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent are library services marketed for enhanced library patronage in the libraries?
2. What are the available facilities for marketing library services for enhanced library patronage in the libraries?
3. What are the strategies used for marketing library services for enhanced library patronage in the libraries?
4. To what extent does users utilize the marketed library services for enhanced library patronage in the libraries?
5. What are the challenges affecting marketing of library services for enhanced users' patronage in the libraries?

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted in carrying out this study. This design was deemed suitable because it facilitated the collection of data from both librarians and users, which were used to describe and explain the status of marketing strategies for enhancing library patronage in federal polytechnic libraries in south east, Nigeria. This study was carried out in south east, Nigeria. South-East Nigeria is one of the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The population of the study is 102 comprising of 26 librarians and 76 library users from the four (4) federal polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria. Structured questionnaire, observation checklist and interview schedule were used as instruments for data collection. The observation checklist was used to check and determine the facilities available for marketing library services in each of the libraries under study; while the interview schedule was used to elicit data on marketing strategies for enhancing polytechnic library patronage. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were employed in the data analysis, while qualitative analysis was adopted in analysing data gotten from the interview schedule which involved thematic content analysis in prose form.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study are presented in table 1-4 below:

Research Question 1: to what extent are library services marketed for enhanced library patronage in the libraries?

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Table 1: *Mean ratings of librarians on extent library services are marketed for enhanced library patronage*

S/N	Items	Mean	Std	Rank	Decision
1	Audio visual services	2.43	1.07	13th	**LE**
2	Bindery services.	2.65	1.07	11th	**HE**
3	Reprographic services.	2.82	.83	8th	**HE**
4.	Inter-library loan services.	2.30	.82	16th	**LE**
5	Translation services	1.95	.97	19th	**VLE**
6	Library renting services for exams, conferences, etc	2.82	.83	8th	**HE**
7	Online information services	3.30	.87	3rd	**HE**
8	Selective Dissemination of Information services	3.00	.79	5th	**HE**
9	Current Awareness Services	2.95	1.06	6th	**HE**
10	Bibliographic services	2.91	.94	7th	**HE**
11	Abstracting services	2.65	.98	11th	**HE**
12	Indexing services	2.73	.91	10th	**HE**
13	Literature search services	2.65	.83	11th	**HE**
14	Research services	2.47	1.03	12th	**LE**
15	Document delivery services	2.39	.89	14th	**LE**
16	Printing services	2.47	.84	12th	**HE**
17	Recreational/Relaxation services	2.21	.90	17th	**LE**
18	Book review services	2.34	.88	15th	**LE**
19	Library orientation services	3.13	1.01	4th	**HE**
20	Knowledge management services	2.39	.94	14th	**LE**
21	Information media literacy	2.43	1.07	13th	**LE**
22	Archiving services	2.00	.73	18th	**LE**
23	Preservation services	2.78	.79	9th	**HE**
24	Consultancy services	2.78	.85	9th	**HE**

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S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Rank	Remark
25	Reference services	3.39	.89	2nd	**HE**
26	Circulation services	3.56	.50	1st	**VHE**
27	Exhibition and display services	3.30	.76	3rd	**HE**
28	Provision of seating and study facilities	3.30	.82	3rd	**HE**
Cluster Mean		**2.72**			**HE**

S/N	Items	Fed Poly Oko			Fed Uwana Poly			IMT Enugu			Fed Poly Nekede			Total %		
		AU	ANU	NA	AU	ANU	NA	AU	ANU	NA	AU	ANU	NA	AU	ANU	NA
Furniture																
1	Display stands	√	*	*	√	*	*	√	*	*	√	*	*	4 / 100	0 / 0	0 / 0
2	Notice board/ Bulletin	*	√	*	*	√	*	*	√	*	√	*	*	1 / 25	3 / 75	0 / 0
3	Display rack	√	*	*	√	*	*	√	*	*	√	*	*	4 / 100	0 / 0	0 / 0
Electronic Facilities																
4	Television	*	√	*	*	*	√	*	*	√	*	*	√	0 / 0	1 / 25	3 / 75
5	Radio	*	*	√	*	*	√	*	*	√	*	*	√	0 / 0	0 / 0	4 / 100
6	Overhead projector	*	√	*	*	√	*	*	√	*	√	*	*	1 / 25	3 / 75	0 / 0
7	Online database	√	*	*	√	*	*	√	*	*	√	*	*	4 / 100	0 / 0	0 / 0
Physical Facilities																
8	Newspapers	*	*	√	√	*	*	*	*	√	*	*	√	1 / 25	0 / 0	3 / 75
9	Information leaflets	√	*	*	*	√	*	√	*	*	√	*	*	3 / 75	1 / 25	0 / 0
10	Journals	√	*	*	*	*	√	*	*	√	*	√	*	1 / 25	1 / 25	2 / 50

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11	Magazine	√	*	*	√	*	*	√	*	*	√	*	*	4	0	0
															100	0	0
Total Sum															**23**	**9**	**12**
Percentage															**52.27**	**20.45**	**27.27**
Decision															**AVU**		

Table 1 shows result on extent library services are marketed for enhanced library patronage. It Indicates that circulation services are marketed to very high extent. Additionally, reference services, exhibition and display services, online information services, and the provision of seating and study facilities, as well as library orientation services, are marketed to a high extent. Furthermore, research services, audio visual services and information media literacy, document delivery services and knowledge management services, book review services etc are marketed to a low extent. However, translation service is marketed to a very low extent. The cluster mean (2.72) indicates that library services are marketed to high extent in the libraries. The standard deviation which range from 1.07 - .73 shows high variations in the opinions of the librarians. This finding aligns with the assertions of Emmanuel, John, & Etim (2020) who emphasized the necessity for libraries to provide and disseminate an optimal level of information resources and services to effectively reach users. Therefore to achieve enhanced patronage, federal polytechnic libraries in South-East, Nigeria must ensure they provide and circulate adequate information resources and services to enable users have easy access to their desired information.

In the interview, the polytechnic librarians across the four libraries disclosed that the library services that are marketed in their libraries are audio visual, bindery, translation, selective dissemination of information, current awareness services, indexing, literature search, research, document delivery, library orientation, information media literacy, preservation, consultancy, reference, circulation, exhibition and display, provision of seating and study facilities.

Research Question 2: What facilities are available for marketing library services for enhanced library patronage in the libraries?

Table 2: ***Frequency count and percentages on facilities available for marketing of library services for enhanced library patronage***

AU = Available and in Use, **ANU** = Available and not in Use, **NA** = Not Available, **%** = Percentage, **Fed Poly Oko** = Federal Polytechnic Oko, **Fed Poly Uwana** = Federal Polytechnic Uwana, **IMT Enugu** = Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu, **Fed Poly Nekede** = Federal Polytechnic Nekede.

Table 2 shows result on facilities available for marketing library services for enhanced library

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patronage. It shows that the facilities that are available and in use are display stand (100%), display rack (100%), online database (100%), information leaflets (75%) and magazine (100%). The facilities that are available and not in use are notice board / bulletin (75%) and overhead projector (75%). The facilities that are not available as indicated in the table are television (75%), radio (100%), newspapers (75%), and journals (50%). The total sum 23/44 representing 52.27% shows that the facilities are available and in use in the libraries under study.

The responses from polytechnic librarians in the interview shows that the facilities used in marketing library services are display stands, notice board/bulletin, display rack, overhead projector, online database, information leaflets, magazines. From their responses, it was obvious that display stands is the most used facility.

Research Question 3: What are the strategies used for marketing library services for enhanced library patronage in the libraries?

Table 3: *Frequency count and mean ratings of librarians on strategies used for marketing library services for enhanced library patronage*

S/N	Items	Mean	Std	Rank	Decision
1	Exhibitions and display of new arrivals	3.82	.38	1st	SA
2	Use of leaflets and posters	3.17	.65	10th	A
3	Sending out brochure or flyers	2.82	.98	13th	A
4	Organizing user education.	3.73	.44	2nd	SA
5	Creating a library web page	3.30	.82	8th	A
6	Provision of electronic access to information.	3.60	.58	3rd	SA
7	Requesting for contributions from users while making acquisition,	3.13	.96	11th	A
8	Increase interpersonal relationship between staff and users	3.47	.66	4th	A
9	Sending personal letters to users through E-mall and text messages.	3.08	.84	12th	A
10	One on one discussion with users.	3.34	.64	7th	A
11	Having representative in institutional functions.	3.30	.55	8th	A
12	Advertising in print and electronic media.	3.13	.81	11th	A

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13	Staff friendliness to users	3.39	.58	6th	**A**
14	Provision of suggestion boxes	3.73	.44	2nd	**SA**
15	Librarians should be properly dressed.	3.43	.58	5th	**A**
16	Organizing library week.	3.21	.85	9th	**A**
Cluster Mean		**3.35**			**A**

A = Agree

Table 3 shows result on strategies used for marketing of library services for enhanced library patronage. It shows that librarians strongly agree that exhibitions and display of new arrivals, provision of suggestion boxes, Organizing user education, and provision of electronic access to information ranked 1st, 2nd, and 3rd as methods used for marketing of library services. Other methods used for marketing of library services are rated agree such as increase interpersonal relationship between staff and users, librarians should be properly dressed, staff friendliness to users, and one on one discussion with users. The lowly rated agreed methods used for marketing of library services are requesting for contributions from users while making acquisition, advertising in print and electronic media, sending personal letters to users through E-mall and text messages, and sending out brochure or flyers ranked 11th to 13th. The cluster mean (3.25) shows that librarians agree that the methods are used in marketing library services. The standard deviation .98 - .38 shows high response variance. Exhibition and display of new arrivals is an essential strategy used in marketing library services for enhanced library patronage. This affirms the submission of Fachano (2018) who said book exhibition and display promotes, informs, and/or persuades users about the existence of resources and services in the library. Imperatively, exhibition and display of new arrivals are powerful means of advertising the information services and educational values of the institution in general and the library in particular aimed at drawing users' attention to new collections, special collections, reserve materials and services that are offered within the library that often go unnoticed.

Research Question 4: To what extent do users utilize the marketed library services for enhanced library patronage in the libraries?

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Table 4: *Frequency count and mean rating of users on extent of utilizing the marketed library services for enhanced library patronage*

S/N	Items	Mean	Std	Rank	Decision
1	Audio visual services	2.64	1.06	19th	U
2	Bindery services.	3.27	.70	8th	U
3	Reprographic services.	2.98	.87	14th	U
4.	Inter-library loan services.	2.35	.94	25th	FU
5	Translation services	2.48	.88	22nd	FU
6	Library renting services for exams, conferences, etc	2.59	.83	20th	U
7	Online information services	2.75	.91	17th	U
8	Selective Dissemination of Information services	2.44	.78	23rd	FU
9	Current Awareness Services	2.39	.91	24th	FU
10	Bibliographic services	2.80	.81	16th	U
11	Abstracting services	3.26	.71	9th	U
12	Indexing services	3.13	.73	12th	U
13	Literature search services	3.30	.67	7th	U
14	Research services	3.56	.71	2nd	HU
15	Document delivery services	2.59	.91	19th	U
16	Printing services	3.23	.76	10th	U
17	Recreational/Relaxation services	2.67	.99	18th	U
18	Book review services	2.53	1.03	21st	U
19	Library orientation services	3.46	.82	5th	U
20	Knowledge management services	2.75	.91	17th	U
21	Information media literacy	2.75	.89	17th	U
22	Archiving services	2.96	.87	15th	U
23	Preservation services	3.03	.83	13th	U

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	Std	Rank	Decision
24	Consultancy services	3.15	.71	11th	U
25	Reference services	3.61	.67	1st	HU
26	Circulation services	3.55	.78	3rd	HU
27	Exhibition and display services	3.48	.59	4th	U
28	Provision of seating and study facilities	3.43	.73	6th	U
Cluster Mean		**2.96**			**U**

HU= Highly Utilized, U= Utilized, FU= Fairly Utilized

Table 4 shows result on extent to which users utilize the marketed library services for enhanced library patronage in the libraries. It indicates that reference services, research services and circulation services are highly utilized. The library services utilized by users as shown in the result are exhibition and display services, library orientation service, provision of seating and study facilities, literature search services etc. Furthermore, translation services, selective dissemination of information services, current awareness service and inter-library loan services are fairly utilized. The cluster mean (2.96) indicate that users utilize the marketed library services for enhanced users' patronage in the libraries.

Reference service is very important because it helps establish contact between a user and the right information resource and service at the right time, thereby saving the time of the user. This is in line with Umoh (2017) who pointed out that reference sessions teach students the critical thinking skills necessary for using Library information resources are one of the basic services provided by the staff particularly to new students of the institutions in Nigeria. When this service is properly marketed and utilized by users, enhanced patronage is achieved.

Research Question 5: What are the challenges affecting marketing of library services for enhanced library patronage in the libraries?

Table 4: *Mean rating of librarians on challenges affecting marketing of library services for enhanced library patronage*

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	Std	Rank	Decision
1	Lack of effective communication between librarians and users	3.78	.42	1st	SA
2	Lack of marketing concepts by the management	3.43	.50	2nd	A

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3	Librarians do not know how to market library services	2.65	.93	11th	**SA**
4	Inadequate funds	3.78	.42	1st	**SA**
5	Lack of training in marketing/lack of competence in marketing	3.21	.59	4th	**A**
6	Lack of facilities to market library services	3.34	.64	3rd	**A**
7	Management does not have marketing policy	3.00	.85	5th	**A**
8	Lack of media access to marketing of academic library services	2.95	.70	6th	**A**
9	Lack of staff's friendliness to clients	3.21	.59	4th	**A**
10	Lack of conducive library environment	2.69	1.14	10th	**A**
11	Lack of contributions from staff while making acquisitions	2.82	1.15	8th	**A**
12	Lack of contributions from students while making acquisitions.	2.86	1.14	7th	**A**
13	Lack of representations in academic institution's functions	2.78	1.04	9th	**A**
Cluster Mean		**3.11**			**A**

Table 5 shows result on the challenges affecting marketing of library services for enhanced library patronage. It reveals that librarians strongly agree that lack of effective communication between librarians and users and inadequate funds ranked 1st as challenges affecting marketing of library services. Other challenges affecting marketing of library services are rated agree such as lack of marketing concepts by the management, lack of facilities to market library services, management does not have marketing policy, lack of media access to marketing of academic library services, and lack of contributions from students while making acquisitions ranked 2nd to 8th. The least rated challenge is lack of conducive library environment. The cluster mean (3.11) shows that the librarians agree that the identified challenges affecting marketing strategies of library services for enhanced users' patronage. The standard deviation which range from 1.15 - 42 shows high response variation of the librarians.

This support Patton (2021) who remarked that communication was a major problem between librarians and users. The gap in communication between librarians and users hinder users from seeking assistance of what service the library

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offers. Some users prefer to rely on friends for information or instruction than asking a librarian. Lack of effective communication between librarians and users give room to inefficiency on the part of the library and lack of direction on the part of users. To overcome this challenge, librarians must effectively communicate with users as a means to ascertain their various information service needs. This will help in effectively marketing library services for enhanced users' patronage.

Inadequate fund is another challenge affecting marketing strategies of library services for enhanced users' patronage. Funds given to libraries are not commensurate with rapid growth and new development in institutions. This is in line with Aderibigbe and Farouk (2017) who concluded in their study on challenges of marketing information resources and services in federal university libraries. According to them, the major problem hindering effective marketing of library services was inadequate funds. Most libraries remain libraries only in name and are unable to market their information resources and services to users for enhanced patronage. Okoronkwo (2015) also supported this fact when he asserted that academic libraries in Nigeria are at a cross roads. This is because they are operating in an era of dwindling finances were they are unable to provide and market qualitative information resources and services to users for enhanced patronage. The implication of these challenges is that federal polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria must understand and adopt various strategies used in marketing library services for enhanced users' patronage especially in this competitive era where they are no longer the only source of information service providers.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study as it relates research question 1-5, the following conclusions are drawn. Marketing of library services is necessary in order to achieve the objectives of the library and to enlighten users on the relevance of library use. The status of marketing strategies of library services for enhanced users' patronage in federal polytechnic libraries in South East, Nigeria was unknown. It therefore became imperative to carry out an investigation on marketing strategies of library services for enhanced users' patronage in federal polytechnic libraries in South East, Nigeria.

The findings of the study revealed that library services are marketed to a high extent for enhanced users' patronage in federal polytechnic libraries in South East, Nigeria. However, if other services are marketed at a very high extent, the attention of users will be drawn and thus enhance patronage. Exhibition and display of new arrivals, provision of suggestion boxes, and organising user education are the strategies used in marketing library services. Imperatively, federal polytechnic libraries in South East, Nigeria should introduce new strategies for marketing their services for enhanced users' patronage.

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Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1.   Librarians should always market their services for enhanced users' patronage..

2.   Librarians should use appropriate promotional methods in creating awareness of its information resources and services for enhanced users' patronage.

3.   Users should always utilize the marketed library services to achieve their educational and research objectives

4.   Effective communication between librarians and users should be encouraged for enhanced patronage

5.   Adequate funds should be allocated to the development of libraries by parent organizations.

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