

Researchers' Profile for Effective Marketing of Library Services in University Libraries in North East, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the researchers' profile for effective marketing of library services in university libraries in North East, Nigeria. The study was guided by three purposes which include: to explore the methods employed in obtaining researchers' profile for effective marketing of library services in university libraries; to ascertain the extent to which researchers' profiles contributes to effective marketing of library services in university libraries, and to determine challenges associated with obtaining researchers' profile for effective marketing of library services in university libraries. In line with the purposes, three research questions were formulated. The descriptive survey design was employed for the study. A total of one hundred and ninety librarians working in the university libraries in the North East were used as the population of study using purposive sampling technique, while a questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation was adopted for data analysis. The study found that the methods or ways employed in obtaining researchers' profile for effective marketing of library services include: interaction with researchers as they visit the library by librarian designate, telephone calls; analysis of individual interviews/chats to establish profile; use of faculty notice board to call for researchers's profile to the library. The study also revealed that researchers' profile contributes less to effective marketing of library services. Some of the challenges faced are: lack of adequate staff, inadequate ICT facilities, ineffective network access in the library, lack of appropriate profiling software, lack of appropriate ICT facilities for profiling, lack of trained staff with marketing skills, poor power supply to the library, inadequate funding, etc. Other recommendations made include: university library staff especially the professionals should cloth themselves with humility in order to accommodate every researcher regardless of their manners of approach since the methods mostly employed in obtaining researchers' profile for effective marketing of library services rest on professional library staff, etc.

Keywords: Researchers Profile, Effective Marketing, Library Services, University Libraries, North East Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

University libraries are institutions whose operations consist of supporting academic activities both in research and teaching. Universities basically are known for research, teaching and learning and these tasks rest squarely on the researchers. The key driving force for the attainment of set goals in universities across the globe are the researchers. Researchers in this study refer to the faculty teaching staff of universities whose part of the responsibility is to conduct research. They are heavily dependent on university libraries for the provision of information resources and services. This makes the place of the library in the university community unquestionable if the faculty teaching staff must function effectively. Pasheva

(2019) states that university libraries are responsible for connecting faculty teaching staff with their wealth of information resources and services towards goal attainments.

The university library as an important segment of the parent body is saddled with some basic functions that will enhance the achievement of the overall objectives of the parent body. In almost all cases, university libraries store and manage access to information bearing materials that support both general research, specific programs and degrees offered at the institution. Prior the new technology which brought about a lot of ease in publishing and communication, university libraries by and large had no need to market content of their libraries. The reason being information resources then were few, subjects offered in universities were few, research scholars few and there were no competitors.

No university can be effective in its academic work without a good and functional library. Hence, university libraries are established in universities with the responsibility of providing relevant information resources and services that would enhance effective teaching, learning and research process of their parent institutions. Yusuf and Iwu (2010) clearly stated, “university libraries are the nerve centers or the hub around which scholarship revolves”. They are indispensable instruments for intellectual development, being storehouses of information to which users may turn to for accessing information needed. Also, Eze and Uzoigwe (2013) observed that the university library with its resources and services are at the heart of the university educational system. However, as the educational sector began to witness increase in research and development activities, proliferation of subject areas leading to information overload, libraries were also experiencing rise in information resources and number of users with diverse information demands. This implies that university libraries need to device means for effective marketing of their services to researchers.

University libraries collaborate with several other representatives of their administrative groups on the educational programs of their universities through the development of the competencies of knowledge management skills in recognizing information needs, obtaining information required, assessing, handling, and applying knowledge and specialist experience. In conjunction with general policy research and development processes, such as library budgetary control, the comprehensive provision of educational programs and facilities must be scheduled. Such a strategy can also include planning for collaboration-designed programs with other university units as a productive influence on academic achievement for students (Sabashini, Rita, & Vivek, 2012). With the above definitions, a university library can be seen as a library that has been established along with the university to provide the research, educational, recreational, and teaching and information needs of the user community.

Effective marketing is the plan that helps to connect users, customers or clients with products and services that are appealing and distinctive to their needs. It is the returns on a marketing deal against predestine set of objectives (Wycherley, 2019). In order to effectively market university library services that meet the needs of the researchers in this era of information explosion, technology revolution, escalating library costs, increasing competition among information providers and web-based commercial service providers, university libraries need to develop profile of researchers in terms of their educational background, area of research interest, preferences and opinions. This study thus centered on using researchers’ profile as a tool for effective marketing of library services in universities in North East, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to examine the outcome of researchers’ profile on effective marketing of library service. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Explore the methods employed in obtaining researchers’ profile for effective marketing of library services in university libraries;

- ii. Ascertain the extent to which researchers' profile contributes to effective marketing of library services in university libraries, and
- iii. Determine challenges associated with obtaining researchers' profile for effective marketing of library services in university libraries.

Research Questions

- i. What are the methods employed in obtaining researchers' profile for effective marketing of library services in university libraries?;
- ii. What is the extent to which researchers' profile contributes to effective marketing of library services in university libraries?
- iii. What are the challenges associated with obtaining researchers' profile for effective marketing of library services in university libraries?.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Researchers are persons involved in scientific inquiry to discover new knowledge, confirm, refute existing theories or find explanation to societal occurrences. Researchers are highly esteemed users of university libraries given their responsibility and busy schedules which range from teaching, setting examination, marking, supervision, membership of different university committees among others. Researchers' information needs include background information about an area of interest to start research; high-qualitative, authoritative and authenticated information sources to write and publish; current, accurate, timely and easily accessible information (Zijl, 2005: 71-75). Ezeala and Hundu (2016) reported that researchers require information to carry out research, write conference papers, for ideas, new projects, establish facts, current awareness, lecturing, and decision-making. Effective marketing of library services to this group of users would entail knowledge of their diverse research interest and informational needs which is achievable through their profiles (Evans & Saponaro, 2012). Profiles help in developing an understanding of specific experience which can lead to improved value of a business as well as influence organizations on how best to support it.

Profiles are characteristics or description of the unique features of a person or a thing for identification. Iyayi, Akinmayowa and Enaini (2013) define profiling as scrutiny at the point to which something exhibits diverse uniqueness. The description could be lengthy or short about someone or a group. It is the process of gathering facts on something, someone, or a group to obtain a vivid picture of it. Park, Hyesung and Lim (2015) from a classroom point posit that profiling is to help gain knowledge about the learners. They state that students or pupils generally are not the same hence their profiles in terms of name, age, gender, family background are important sources of information that reveal their learning ability while teachers are well guided. A method towards achieving the purpose of profiling exercise differs from domain to domain. Williamson (2020) and Girase and Mukhopadhyay (2014) identified methods for obtaining profiles to include surveys, online tracking, social media monitoring, explicit, and implicit and hybrid approach.

Marketing library services and products is significant in any dynamic library services in any competitive environment. It is a tool intended to help service organizations connect products and services to targeted users. According to Webber (2016), organizations such as museums, universities, libraries and charities need to market their causes to gain political, social as well as economic support. Adeyoyin (2015) posit that when library services are marketed, it builds relationship between the user and the library which is vital as libraries are no longer the only source of information provider. Sharma and Bhardwaj (2019) affirm that it is imperative for librarians to vigorously market their services to spread information and draw

awareness of their resources and services to users. Furthermore marketing brings about need for more services and improved relationship with users.

Effective marketing makes a difference in any enterprise once a customer/user is involved. It functions to improve the quality and precision in the provision of information resources and services as demanded by researchers to achieve results. It gets the customers to place a high value on services so they will want to consume more. In summary, the continuous rise in information resources due to technology revolution, researchers' ever increasing demand for diverse information and the growing competition in the information service industry demands university libraries obtain profile of researchers for precision in providing library services that meet up their needs. It is in recognition of the above assertion that prompted the need to carry out a study on researchers' profile for effective marketing of library services in university libraries in North East, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was employed for the study. The area of study was the North East geographical zone of Nigeria comprising six states (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe) with focus on researchers' profile for effective marketing of library services in university libraries. The population of the study was 190 librarians working in both federal and state university libraries in the North East, Nigeria. Purposive sampling techniques were used for the study because the entire population can be studied. The instrument for data collection was a self-designed structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics using mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation was used for data analysis to answer the research questions.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Out of the one hundred and ninety (190) instruments administered to the librarians in the university libraries, one hindered and eighty four (184) represent ninety seven percent (97%) were successfully filled, retrieved and found useful for the analysis.

Research Question One: What are the methods employed in obtaining researchers' profiles for effective marketing of library services in university libraries?

Table 1: Mean responses of methods employed in obtaining researchers' profile for effective marketing of library services

		Ownership				Overall		Rank	Decision
		Federal		State		Mean	SD		
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
1	Analyze completed template to segment their details manually	2.31	1.01	2.26	.85	2.30	.97	9 th	LE
2	Analyze individual interviews/chats to establish profile	3.02	.82	2.98	.77	3.01	.80	3 rd	E
3	Analyze past information resources usage from the record available to predict future use of similar resources	2.97	.86	2.70	.73	2.89	.84	5 th	E
4	Analyze researchers present request of information resources for purchase	2.61	.92	2.43	.93	2.56	.92	7 th	E
5	Use software to analyze and group researchers details	2.10	1.02	1.83	.74	2.03	.96	6 th	LE

6	Use faculty notice board to call for researchers profiles to the library	2.90	.80	3.00	.79	2.92	.80	4 th	E
7	Telephone calls	3.02	.81	3.20	.75	3.06	.79	2 nd	E
8	Use social media technologies like Facebook Twitter, My Space, and etc library monitors researchers' interest.	2.43	.96	2.15	.99	2.35	.98	8 th	LE
9	Interaction with researchers as they visit the library by librarian designate	3.13	.70	3.15	.70	3.14	.70	1 st	E
Cluster Mean		2.72	.88	2.63	.81	2.70	.84		E

Keys: Highly employed =HE; Employed=E; Less employed=LE; Not Employed=NE; SD= Standard Deviation

Of the methods employed in obtaining researchers' profiles for effective marketing of library services, items 2, 3, 6, 7 and 9 are employed, while items 1, 5 and 8 are less employed. The standard deviation values for nine items in the table ranged from .70 to .97 which indicates that the responses were close.

Research Question Two: What is the extent to which researchers' profile contributed to effective marketing of library services in university libraries?

Table 2: Mean responses of the extent to which researchers' profiles contribute to effective marketing of library services

		Ownership				Overall		Rank	Decision
		Federal		State		Mean	SD		
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
1	Enable library the ability to establish individual profiles of researchers' at the point of registering with the library	3.01	.78	3.09	.78	3.03	.78	1 st	HE
2	The library through information profiling can segment the researchers' into groups after identifying the area of interest for sharing related information resources	2.40	1.03	2.13	.91	2.32	1.00	5 th	LE
3	It has enabled the library to know when who and how to market its services to.	2.44	.98	2.22	.92	2.38	.97	4 th	LE
4	It has led to improved communication between the library and the researchers' as their profiles are known	2.40	1.04	2.39	1.18	2.40	1.08	3 rd t	LE

5	Library funds are better focused on collections that meet the needs of researchers	1.92	.97	2.17	1.00	1.99	.98	12 th	LE
6	It has enabled the library to witness improved traffic on resource use.	3.02	.70	2.93	.65	2.99	.68	2 nd	HE
7	It has enabled and encourages collaborative research among researchers	2.16	.97	2.39	.91	2.22	.96	7 th	LE
8	It gives the library a competitive advantage over other information providers as researchers' needs are being met	2.39	.84	1.98	.88	2.28	.87	6 th	LE
9	Interaction with researchers' as they visit the library	2.17	1.03	2.30	.99	2.21	1.01	8 th	LE
10	Library services are now periodically reviewed to reflect the current needs of researchers	2.23	.88	1.83	.90	2.12	.90	11 th	LE
11	It has enabled librarians to demonstrate their worth to researchers	2.19	.87	2.04	.70	2.15	.83	10 th	LE
12	Enable researchers to be well informed of the resources in the library database	2.23	1.02	2.09	.94	2.19	1.00	9 th	LE
	Cluster Mean	2.38	.93	2.30	.90	2.36	.90		LE

Keys: Very Highly Effective=VHE; Highly Effective=HE; Low Effective=LE; Not Effective=NE; SD= Standard Deviation

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which researchers' profiles contribute to the effective marketing of library services. Only two (2) items, 1 and 6, appear to show the extent to which researchers' profiles contribute to effective marketing of library services, while the rest items, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, contribute less to effective marketing of library services. The standard deviation values for items in the table ranged from .78 to 1.08 which shows that the respondents were not far from each other in their answers.

Research Question Three: what are the challenges associated with obtaining researchers' profile for effective marketing of library services in university libraries?.

Table 3: Mean responses of challenges associated with obtaining researchers' profiles for the effective marking of library services

		Ownership				Overall		Rank	Decision
		Federal		State		Mean	SD		
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
1	Lack of adequate staff	2.80	.87	3.39	.74	2.96	.88	5 th	A
2	ICT facilities are inadequate for the information profiling of researchers needs	2.87	.92	3.00	.76	2.91	.88	8 th	A
3	The university library experiences poor response from researchers	2.94	.84	3.00	.70	2.96	.80	6 th	A
4	Ineffective network access in the library	3.10	.77	2.83	.68	3.02	.75	2 nd	A
5	Lack of appropriate profiling software for profile construction	2.95	.83	3.04	.67	2.98	.79	3 rd	A
6	Lack of appropriate ICT facilities for information profiling	2.90	.88	2.67	.76	2.84	.85	11 th	A
7	Lack of trained staff with marketing skills	2.90	.87	2.85	.73	2.88	.83	9 th	A
8	Lack of communication skills with researchers to facilitate information profiling	2.69	.76	2.67	.76	2.69	.76	19 th	A
9	Poor power supply to the library for effective profiling if researchers needs	3.15	.99	2.83	.80	3.06	.95	1 st	A
10	Poor response attitudes of researchers to library request for profiles	3.02	.81	2.70	.84	2.94	.83	7 th	A
11	Poor record of researchers' profile in the university library	2.90	.71	2.63	.88	2.82	.76	12 th	A
12	Inadequate funding	3.01	.80	2.87	.81	2.97	.80	4 th	A
13	Lack of sufficient information resources in both print and electronic format	2.77	.88	2.54	.78	2.71	.86	17 th	A
14	Lack of the technical know-how to effectively use the ICT facilities	2.77	.93	2.57	.72	2.72	.88	16 th	A
15	Lack of management software	2.81	.88	2.98	.77	2.86	.85	10 th	A
16	Inadequate knowledge in management software	2.77	.86	2.70	.81	2.75	.85	15 th	A
17	Librarians are skeptical about the use of ICT facilities	2.60	.94	2.33	.76	2.52	.90	20 th	A
18	The nonchalant attitude of university librarians towards ICT application	2.67	.89	2.80	.78	2.71	.86	18 th	A
	Cluster Mean	2.86	.86	2.79	.77	2.84	.84		A

Keys: Agree=A; Disagree=D; SD= Standard Deviation

The respondents were asked to indicate challenges associated with obtaining profiles of researchers for the effective marketing of library services. The mean response of all items in both federal and state universities demonstrates the challenges university libraries are facing in the marketing of their services. The standard deviation values for items in the table ranged from .75 to .95 suggesting that the responses from the respondents were not far from each other.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

- The methods or ways employed obtaining researchers' profile for effective marketing of library services include: interaction with researchers as they visit the library by librarian designate, telephone calls; analysis of individual interviews/chats to establish a profile; use of faculty notice board to call for researchers' profiles to the library;
- The study also revealed that researchers' profiles contribute less to effective marketing of library services;
- Some of the challenges faced are lack of adequate staff, inadequate ICT facilities, ineffective network access in the library, lack of appropriate profiling software, lack of appropriate ICT facilities for information profiling, lack of trained staff with marketing skills, poor power supply to the library, inadequate funding, etc.

DISCUSSION

Findings of the study revealed that the methods or ways employed obtaining researchers' profile for effective marketing of library services include: interaction with researchers as they visit the library by librarian designate, telephone calls; analysis of individual interviews/chats to establish a profile; use of faculty notice board to call for researchers' profile to the library; analysis of past information resources usage from the record available to predict future use of similar resources are inappropriate for the information profiling of researchers for effective marketing of library services. These methods show that the university libraries under study rely on manual or traditional tools in obtaining profile of researchers that are comprehensive to effectively market library services in this era of information technology. This is contrary to report by Hinderbelt and Gutwirth (2008) that profiling is better achieved with the help of the new technologies. Bahader, Idrees and Naveed (2021), Nwachokor and Okeke (2020) also in their separate studies stated that software technology should be adopted to increase efficiency in libraries.

The study also revealed that researchers' profiles contribute less to effective marketing of library services, as shown in Table 2. This implies that marketing of library service is more general than specific to researchers' research interest. This cannot be unconnected with the tools employed in obtaining profiles of researchers contrary to findings by Schmidt (2011) that incorporating profiles into the marketing of library services is imperative in helping libraries to demonstrate their expertise.

Challenges revealed in obtaining profiles of researchers include lack of adequate staff, inadequate ICT facilities, ineffective network access in the library, lack of appropriate profiling software, lack of appropriate ICT facilities for information profiling, lack of trained staff with marketing skills, poor power supply to the library, poor response attitudes of researchers to library request for their profiles, inadequate funding, lack of the technical know-how to effectively use the ICT facilities, inadequate knowledge of management software, librarians being skeptical about the use of ICT facilities. This is in line with findings by Igwebuikwe (2018) and Adebayo, Ahmed and Adeniran (2018) who identified inadequate funding for the acquisition of ICT facilities, software hitches, management problems, constant power outage, high cost of maintenance of ICT facilities, lack of ICT skills among librarians, poor ICT development policy in the country, poor maintenance of ICT equipment available, high cost of bandwidth, absence of connectivity, poor, inadequate human technical capacity among others.

It is obvious that information profiling is a necessary tool for effective marketing, however, information profiling of researchers is surrounded by so many challenges that make it difficult to achieve effective marketing of library services.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Profile of researchers is vital with enormous benefit that university libraries cannot overlook in the quest for effective marketing of library services. It enables university libraries to know their researchers, design suitable services and makes it easy to effectively connect researchers with the information resources that are specific to their research needs. By analyzing data collected from respondents, this study has shown that methods employed in obtaining profiles of researchers are more traditional. The library can only catch a glimpse of the profiles of those who use its resources from available records, those that make request for purchase etc. To a large extent, the researchers' profile contributes less to the effective marketing of library services owing to the poor state of obtaining profiles and the challenges identified by the study as impeding the comprehensive researchers' profile for the effective marketing of library services.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are worth consideration:

- University library staff especially the professionals should cloth themselves with humility in order to accommodate every researcher regardless of their manners of approach since the methods mostly employed in obtaining researchers' profile for effective marketing of library services rest on professional library staff;
- More efforts should be placed on exhaustive utilization of information communication technology driven facilities rather than wasting much time in getting the researchers' profile for information generation since they contribute less, and
- The stakeholders must be up and doing in order to fix all the necessary facilities and infrastructures needed to run an effective and efficient library operation that guarantees perfect services delivery to the researchers.

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