Marketing Strategy: A Tool for Library and Information Services Delivery by Academic Libraries in Southwest Nigeria.

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Abstract
Adoption of marketing concept into information oriented organizations such as academic libraries has become imperative especially with the proliferation of information technology where libraries are no longer seen as the sole custodian of knowledge. This study therefore aimed at investigating the need for marketing strategy as tool for library and information services delivery by academic libraries using the various technology driven facilities. The survey research design was adopted for the study. Stratified sampling technique was used to select 6 libraries from federal, state and private owned universities in South Western Nigeria. Total enumeration technique was used in selecting the sample size consisting of 148 librarians and library officers in the institutions. Data were gathered using questionnaire and the findings revealed that face to face approach and use of the notice boards are the most common methods used in these libraries. Though some marketing strategies are already in use, services like indexing and abstracting which is even an ancient strategy is giving way for new technologies. Likewise, database searching, network and rich site summary, and email alerts which are the commonest of all are yet to be fully embraced. It was revealed that adopting marketing strategies in service delivery has enhanced the image of these libraries and has boosted library professionals' self actualization. However, challenges such as inadequate skills and lack of funds among others constitute threats to effective use of marketing strategies in library service delivery.

Introduction:
Ordinarily, traditional librarians in the past had imbibed the philosophy of marketing strategies; therefore the adoption of marketing concept into information-oriented organization such as academic libraries is not an entirely new one. The concept of information marketing stems up from Marketing Information System (MIS) which is a structure within an organisation that is designed to gather, process and store data from the organisation's external and internal environment and to disseminate this in the form of information to the organisation's marketing decision makers (FAO Corporate Document Repository, n.d). The activities performed by an MIS and its subsystems include information discovery, collection, interpretation (which may involve validation and filtering), analysis, and intra-company dissemination (storage, transmission, and/or dumping). In library and information context, marketing can be described as ways of identifying the variety of library patrons' demands and expectations and leveraging to serve the increasing potential clientele. To say that for any commercial organisation to thrive, marketing of goods and services is inevitable in saying the obvious. The same goes for library and information services especially in the face of technological developments that are being witnessed across the globe day in day out. In the provision of library and information services, marketing is a strategic activity (Robinson, 2006a), and not a task. It is obvious that in today's environment, academic libraries are only one of the many information providers, and because like many other organizations, academic libraries also reside in a competitive environment, they are increasingly competing for consumers in an information market place (Lee, 2007).Therefore, the need to motivate their users in using library products and services becomes inevitable less they lose them to other information providers.

Just the way commercial organizations strategically break market into segmentations, which is the breaking down of consumers into homogenous groups before identifying target audiences and their particular needs; libraries also need to segment their user community into groups based on their needs and requirements. Libraries need to have an objective picture and understanding of those unique and special services they offer and its value in marketplace (Ashcroft, 2007). Specifically for Academic libraries which can be described as the heart of higher institutions because of their role, function and importance, marketing of the various products housed therein and services they render is inevitable. To achieve this, strategy is key, and this can only be achieved through modernization of some of their roles or functions (Singh & Shukla, 2009).

In the past, the traditional library is viewed by many as a place for stacks of books to gather dust, and where stern librarians in tweed jackets tell you to keep quiet (Wheeler, 2012), but a visit to the university library today will reveal a substantial investment in technology to streamline research and provide users with more seamless and rewarding experience. The question is how can librarians get library patrons to maximize the various information resources available for research and development in their various disciples? It is noteworthy that some library clients are not even aware of the existence of some library technological driven resources, let alone making use of them. This may be why Nolan (1980) advises professional librarians to become entrepreneurs. According to her, many libraries whether special, corporate, private or public are

facing a similar scenario: ``Do more with less and less``. She stresses that Librarians must not wait for people who have no idea how libraries are managed and who do not care about their work to change their situations for them. Library must be run like commercial firms and professional librarians must be the managers. To achieve this, libraries need to continue to provide a highly skilled service that is able to meet the needs of the general public (Clarke, 2010). Specifically for librarians in academic libraries, they must set up a modality for assessing the value of services they are currently providing to their users, determine where they want to be and how to get there. To get these done, an action plan must be put in place to achieve goals and objectives and machineries to achieve these must be set in motion.

More so, the invention of information and communication technology in the 21st century has brought about a paradigm shift. This shift has enhance the cacophony of library services not only in the public domain but within the academic environment, and marketing as a strategy will not only broaden the frontier of professional services of academic libraries beyond its basic functions but will also make the products and services rendered to be vibrant and enticing. However, it has not been empirically established if academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria have fully maximize the various marketing strategies available in the provision of library services to their teeming patrons. It is also not clear if these libraries have been able to add value to their services through strategic marketing.

Objectives of the study
To guide this study, the following four objectives are proposed:
> To identify the methods of marketing library services in academic libraries
> To investigate what marketing strategy are adopted in delivering library services
> To establish the impact of marketing on library and information professional's self actualization and library image
> To identify challenges confronting marketing of library services in academic libraries.

Review of Related Literature
There are two main objectives of academic libraries. The first one is to provide right information to right user at right time, simply put, satisfying user/customer needs. The second objective is related to the first - if products/services are provided at the right time to the right user thereby fulfilling the user's need, the chain of marketing is completed. The main purpose of marketing in academic libraries is to encounter a four-pronged challenge: increase in clientele, their variety, their demands, and their expectations; increase initial or capital cost of information and information technology, and their need to leverage the technology and find new levels of economies of scale to serve the increasing potential clientele; in the event of drying up of the public sponsorship and subsidy, the need to find alternative sources of revenue; and lastly, complexity in ways of identifying clients and their requirements, and servicing them (Singh &Shukla, 2009).

To achieve this, marketing strategy is the key and can only be done by metamorphorsizing some of traditional library roles and functions. First, libraries offer specialized search services which go beyond the simple searches you can perform on Google or other search engines. Services such as 'Library 2.0' indicates a trend away from traditional repository approaches to a more distributed range of digital services for staff and students, with particular emphasis on the tools students are already familiar with which is Web 2.0 social media (Wheeler, 2012).

Second, the need to bridge the digital divide rest solely on libraries. Libraries are still needed to inform users about best practice in the use of search tools and the promotion of better digital literatures thereby acting as a bridge between the information-rich and the information-poor (Clarke, 2010). Therefore, the need to continue to provide a highly skilled service that is able to meet the needs of the general public is required especially from academic libraries where one of the key development areas of 21st century learning is the potential to use technology to support study in a variety of modes.

Third, there is now more than ever the need for professional librarians to run libraries like business organizations. Nolan (1980) advises professional librarians to become entrepreneurs. As conceptualized in previous studies, issue of service quality and service quality evaluation in academic libraries (Martensen & Gronholdt, 2003, Cook & Thompson, 2000, Hernon, Nitechi & Altman, 1999) must be given priority. Library must be run like commercial firms where objectives and goals are pursued assiduously with the aim of maximizing profits and professional librarians must be the managers. In these days of information technology, various means could be employed to achieve this.

Another strategy is the use of indexing and abstracting, Onwuchekwa, (2013) while indexing is a superior techniques for retrieving relevant information contained in documents stored in the library, abstracts, index entries, title listings, and other forms of document representations are highly organized and detailed guides that lead user to the originals that the libraries are expected to furnish, in addition to acting as guides, document representations also to provide the user with means of appraising the value of the available literature, it s relevance to his area of interest, and his need for the original. Both abstracting and indexing

databases have been found to still be both relevant and necessary (Rabe, 2002).

Libraries must bear in mind that though they are competing with other information brokers such as Amazon, Emerald and Ebsco that provide (on sale) information resources via the internet and free search engines in the likes of google, yahoo, MSN and even the social media; libraries offer specialized search services which go beyond the simple searches you can perform on Google or other search engines. Beyond this, it must be realized that academic library users are also consumers who demand and choose products and services they need in an information market place (Lee, 2007). To this extent, they must be wooed and motivated in order to attract them to library products and services. This will not only enhance academic library relevance but also its survival in the midst of other competitors. The concept of product has been described to include tangible goods and intangible services (Rowley, 2001) and if applied to library situation, it means "anything that can be offered in tangible form to a market to satisfy a need" while service is "any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything"(Andreasen & Kotler, 2003). All services, including library and information services exist for consumers and their continuous existence rest solely on the ability of the organization to meet the need of their consumers through a high quality service (Lee, 2007).

Purposes of marketing in academic libraries according to Singh & Shukla (2009) are two: (i) achieving objective/goals of the library, (ii) Satisfying user/customer needs and wants. Main objectives of academic libraries are to provide right information to right user at right time, and to put it in simple words satisfying user/customer needs. The second purpose is related to first purpose, if we provide product/services at the right time to the right user and fulfill the users need, then the purpose of marketing is complete and the following benefits will accrue: increase in clientele, their variety, their demands, and their expectations; increase in initial or capital cost of information and information technology, and their need to leverage the technology and find new levels of economies of scale to serve the increasing potential clientele; in the event of drying up of the public sponsorship and subsidy, the need to find alternative sources of revenue; and complexity in ways of identifying clients and their requirements, and servicing them.

Summarily therefore, academic libraries stand a better chance in sustaining their patrons and enhancing their services if the right marketing strategy is adopted even in the face of competitors in this age of information technology. The strategy include the following: online information packaging, placing adverts on the internet, sending of bulk text messages, title listing, thesaurus construction, email alerts, indexing and abstracting, document delivery, network and rich site summary, and database searching.

Methodology:
The survey research method was used for the study, and this was conducted in six (6) Universities in Southwestern Nigeria. Sampling was stratified across federal, state and private universities. These consisted of University of Lagos; University of Ibadan; Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba; Osun State University, Ede; Afe Babalola University, Ado Ekiti and Babcock University, Ilisan – Remo in Ogun State. The population of the study consisted of 148 librarians and library officers in these institutions. Instrument of data gathering was the questionnaire. Data gathered were analysed using descriptive statistics facilitated by SPSS for tables, percentages, mean and standard deviations.

Results and Discussion
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.
The demographic characteristics of the respondents revealed the following: Babcock University: 37.8%; University of Ibadan: 31%; University of Lagos: 11.5%; Osun State University: 8.8%; Afe Babalola University: 6.1% and Adekunle Ajasin University: 4.7%. Also, 51.4% of the respondents are male while 48.6% are female. In addition, 42.6% are library officer while 48.6% are Librarians. The Table further revealed that most of the respondents (50.7%) had between 5 and 10 years working experience, 17.6% had between 31 years and 35 years working experience while 14.9% had between 11 years and 15 years working experience. 12.8% had between 21 years and 26 years experience while 2.0% had between 16 years and 20 years and between 26 years and 30 years working experience.

Table 1 revealed that face to face approach method with mean scores of 4.72 is mostly used by academic libraries in rendering library services. This is closely followed by notice board method with a mean score of 3.80, while the email approach ranked third (3.26). Fax machine (1.73) was the least approach used in rendering the library services by academic libraries. The implication of this is that traditional methods of rendering services is more in use in these libraries as it is obvious that other methods that has to do with the new technology were ranked low. Except the new technology is fully adopted, effective service delivery may be hampered especially when it comes to providing users with what they want and when they want it regardless of where they are physically located (Baron, 1997).

Methods of Marketing Library Services in Academic Libraries
Table 1: Methods of marketing library services

S/N	Method	Never	Rarely	Sometime	Frequently	Very frequently	Mean	Std	Rank
1	Face to face approach	-	-	6(4.1%)	30(20.3%)	112(75.7%)	4.72	0.53	1
2	Through notice boards	3(2%)	10(6.8%)	35(23.6%)	65(43.9%)	35(23.6%)	3.80	0.95	2
3	Phone calls	8(5.4%)	33(22.3%)	77(52%)	24(16.2%)	6(4.1%)	2.91	0.87	5
4	E-Mail	9(6.1%)	18(12.2%)	64(43.2%)	40(27%)	17(11.5%)	3.26	1.02	3
5	Social Media e.g. Face book, Twitter, LinkedIn, Skill Pages	29(19.6%)	44(29.7%)	40(27%)	22(14.9%)	13(8.8%)	2.64	1.21	6
6	Correspondence	10(6.8%)	32(21.6%)	47(31.8%)	33(22.3%)	26(17.6%)	3.22	1.17	4
7	Fax machine	84(56.8%)	40(27%)	9(6.1%)	10(6.8%)	5(3.4%)	1.73	1.07	7

Marketing strategies adopted in academic libraries
Table 2: Marketing Strategies employed in rendering library services

S/N	Strategies	V. Low	Low	Moderate	High	V. High	Mean	Std	Rank
1	Placing adverts on internet	5(3.4%)	9(6.1%)	53(35.8%)	58(39.2%)	23(15.5%)	3.57	0.94	3
2	Information re-packaging	-	23(15.5%)	33(22.3%)	75(50.7%)	17(11.5%)	3.58	0.88	2
3	Indexing and Abstracting	28(18.9%)	29(19.6%)	23(15.5%)	46(31.1%)	22(14.9%)	3.03	1.37	6
4	Title listing	10(6.8%)	20(13.5%)	45(30.4%)	48(32.4%)	25(16.9%)	3.39	1.12	4
5	Thesaurus construction	23(15.5%)	42(28.4%)	47(31.8%)	29(19.6%)	7(4.7%)	2.70	1.09	8
6	Bulk text messages	3(2%)	24(16.2%)	34(23%)	47(31.8%)	40(27%)	3.66	1.10	1
7	Email alerts	47(31.8%)	45(30.4%)	30(20.3%)	16(10.8%)	10(6.8%)	2.30	1.21	10
8	Network & rich site summary	47(31.8%)	32(21.6%)	38(25.7%)	16(10.8%)	15(10.1%)	2.50	1.31	9
9	Document delivery services	16(10.8%)	28(18.9%)	52(35.1%)	32(21.6%)	20(13.5%)	3.08	1.18	5
10	Database searching	31(20.9%)	36(24.3%)	11(26.4%)	39(26.4%)	31(20.9%)	3.02	1.48	7

Impact of marketing on library professional's self actualization and image of the library

Table 3: How marketing has impacted on professional's esteem and the institution

Question		Frequency	Percent
How has marketing of your library services impacted on you as a library and information professional and your library's image	It enables one to understand the real need of users	34	23.0
	It helps to identify the information need of non users	72	48.6
	It assists my library in receiving more funds from the institution	18	12.2
	It helps to improve the image of the library within the institution	24	16.3
	Total	148	100.0

Table 4: Challenges of adopting marketing strategies in academic library service delivery

Question			Frequency	Percent
What are the major challenges encountered in the course of using strategies to market library services		Lack of funds	54	36.5
		Inadequate skills	68	45.9
		Network failure	13	8.8
		Limited Library services	6	4.1
		Inadequate library staff	4	2.7
		Inadequate infrastructural facilities	3	2.0
		Total	148	100.0

Table 2 revealed that the highest marketing strategies employed in rendering library services is sending bulk text messages to library users (3.66). This is followed by information repackaging (3.58) and placing adverts on internet (3.57) respectively. Other strategies include title listing (3.39), document delivery services (3.08), indexing and abstracting (3.03), database searching (3.02), thesaurus construction (2.70). Network and rich site summary (2.50) and email alerts (2.30) were the least adopted approach in marketing library services in the libraries under study. It is very clear that the libraries under study have adopted some marketing strategies in their service delivery; however services such as indexing and abstracting which is even an ancient strategy is giving way. Also, database searching, thesaurus construction, network and rich site summary, and email alerts which is the commonest of all are yet to be fully embraced by these libraries.

Furthermore, table 3 showed that 72 (48.6%) affirmed that marketing strategies has helped them to identify the information needs of non users, while 23% agreed that marketing strategies have enabled them to understand the real needs of users. Also, 16% agreed that marketing strategies have improved the image of the library within the parent organization. The result as presented in this table implies that adopting marketing strategies in library services has a lot of positive impacts on the library and information professional's self actualization as well as the entity called library. This corroborates Steadley (2003) who affirms that effective marketing can among other things: increase library funds, increase usage of services, educate customers and non-customers, change perceptions, and enhance the clout and reputation of the library and its staff. It is therefore worth it after all and if it is working in academic libraries, there is no doubt that it will work for other types of libraries.

Again, when asked to indicate the major challenges encountered in the course of using strategies to market library services, almost half of the respondents (45.9%) stated that inadequate skills in

applying the measured strategies is a major challenge. Another 36.5% indicated lack of fund while some affirmed that network failure (8.8%), limited library services (4.1%), inadequate library staff (2.7%) and inadequate infrastructural facilities 3(2%) as part of the challenges encountered in their bid to use strategies under study to market library services. Just like in every system, it is not surprising that some challenges emanated in libraries' attempt to use marketing strategy in service delivery but what is worrisome is the fact that inadequate skills among library and information professionals ranked the highest challenge. In this age where information technology boom is the order of the day, it is absurd to have inadequate skills as the most prevalent challenge encountered. This is because without strategic marketing and consequent marketing methods, library users are unlikely to be fully aware of what the library can offer them and where inadequate skills becomes a challenge, it may be difficult to achieve much.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Academic libraries are in the business of information provision to their teeming patrons (students, lecturers, researchers) when it comes to what they want, where they want it and how they want it regardless of space and time. To make this workable especially in the face of other competing information providers like the internet and the World Wide Web, strategic marketing and consequent marketing methods need to be adopted. This study has revealed that not many methods are implored by the academic libraries under study in service delivery. Old and traditional methods of service delivery like face to face and notice board approach still topped the list of methods used in service delivery. Also, some of the technological driven strategies are not so embraced in service delivery; this may not be unconnected with inadequate skills of information professionals as revealed in table 5 under the challenges of adopting marketing strategies in academic library service delivery. However, the few methods/strategies already adopted have impacted positively on the self actualization of information professionals as well as boosting the image of the library within the academic community.

In view of the ongoing, the following recommendations are made:

- Academic libraries should fully embrace as many marketing strategies as possible to enhance their service delivery. Both old and new methods of marketing should be combined, for instance, while valuable information is being placed on notice boards, use of the social media should not be ignored. Also, the use of information re-packaging and emails alerts should go pari-pasu. This way, both the old wine and the new one will be contained in the same bottle thereby making it easier to achieve set goals.

- For whatever it will take library and information professionals should strive to obtain necessary skills required in operating various strategies especially where the use of information and communication technology is concerned. Professionals do not have to wait until their employers send them on training to obtain the necessary skills. Some of the skills can actually be learnt from friends and colleagues without taking much time and for the older ones, their grown up children could put them through in a matter of days. All that is required is the interest and making oneself available.

- Also, stakeholders should provide necessary support in terms of funds and infrastructure to execute necessary strategies. Computers with functional internet connection should be made available. Necessary databases should be subscribed to and renew as at when due.

- Academic library patrons should also cooperate with library professional so that they could be served better. Detail information about themselves such as email address, phone numbers, research interest and so on should be provided whenever this is requested from them as this will enhance a quicker and better service delivery, to their benefit.

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