

## Application of place and promotion marketing strategies to library and information services in public universities, in Anambra state, Nigeria

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### Abstract

This study determined the application of place and promotion marketing strategies to library and information services in Nigerian public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Seventy Nine librarians and library officers in public universities in Anambra State were studied without sampling. Structured questionnaire validated by three experts was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was done through trial testing and data analysis using Cronbach alpha yielded correlation coefficients of 0.78 and 0.82 for clusters B1 to B2 with an overall coefficient of 0.80. Mean, standard deviation and t-test were used for data analysis using Special Package for Social sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. Findings revealed that librarians and library officers agreed that they applied majority of the items listed on place and promotion marketing strategies to library and information services. However, they disagreed that most of the items on place as a marketing strategy are applied in this regard. Ownership of university did not significantly influence respondents' mean ratings on application of place and promotion marketing strategies in library and information services. The researcher concluded that librarians and library officers do not adequately apply place and promotion marketing strategies to library and information services. It was recommended among others that; library management in public universities should expose librarians to marketing library services through capacity building programmes to up-date their skills in the application place and promotion marketing strategies to library and information services.

**Keywords:** Place Marketing Strategy, Promotion marketing Strategy, Public University Library, Library and Information Services.

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### 1. Introduction

Academic libraries are essential components of a college, university, or other post-secondary educational institution. They are run to satisfy the informational and research needs of the institution's faculty, staff, and students. In the context of this study, academic libraries are those libraries that were built to serve the information needs of public university communities. According to Zhixian (2016), academic libraries are confronted with a range of issues in the current digital era, including persistent budget cuts, the use of new information technologies, and changing requirements for research and teaching. Marketing strategies are thus a managerial tool that can help academic libraries deal with these difficulties both now and in the future. Users no longer have to rely solely on academic libraries to obtain information, claims Zhixian. Therefore,

marketing strategies are a managerial tool that can help libraries to meet these challenges now and in the future. Academic libraries must develop strategies for effectively promoting services and resources to customers in order to draw customers, increase non-user awareness, and increase awareness of the available services and resources. <sup>[1,2]</sup>

Presently, users no longer have to resort to academic libraries as their only option for information. Academic libraries must therefore devise strategies for efficiently promoting services and resources to customers in order to draw customers, increase non-user awareness, and increase awareness of the available services and resources. As a result, marketing tactics can be employed to inform target markets about the availability and worth of services and resources (Helinsky, 2008; Webreck & Alman,

2007). These marketing plans should be created in a way that attracts users and gives them a reason to choose the library's services over those of rival providers. An organization's marketing strategy is a collection of coordinated choices and actions that it anticipates will help it satisfy both its marketing goals and the needs of its target market (Olson, Slater & Hult, 2014). Marketing strategy involves allocating marketing resources among markets, market segments, and marketing activities (American Marketing Association, 2010). Marketing strategies in the context of this study are the plans or actions taken by librarians to provide library and information services to public institutions. [3,4,5,6,7]

Marketing of library and information services involves creating awareness of the library's existing and new information and services to library users. It involves activities such as identifying user's needs, designing suitable services or product to meet their needs, communication and distribution to inform, motivate and serve the users (Chegwe & Anaehobi, 2015). It is an established sub-set of management practices which identifies customer wants and needs and meets those needs within the resources of the organization (Gupta, Koontz & Massisimo, 2013). Effective marketing strategies take information services to the customer and comprise marketing mix.

Marketing mix refers to a set of variables that can be used by a library to promote its services and resources to users (Zhixian, 2016). As the need for promotion of library services has grown and is now more widely recognized, the marketing mix has been refined and adapted to include services, not just products (Molle, 2013). Marketing mix also referred to as the 4 Ps: price, product, promotion and place was introduced by McCarthy in 1978, however the fifth P, people, is now commonly included. Marketing mix such as place and promotion can be utilized for marketing of library and information services in universities. [8,9,10,11,12]

Coverage, distribution routes, inventory, locations, and transportation are all included in place as a marketing tactic. According to Ravichandran and Babu (2008), place implies that the goods or services should be made available in a location that is simple for customers to go to. The location where the library's information services are provided should be convenient for the patrons. It is expected that library information services will be delivered or made available in a location, whether that location is actual or virtual. The location should be easy for users to access because if it is not, users may experience emotional difficulties and their use of library services would significantly decline. With virtual libraries, users can access any library's information, goods, and services using online services like Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, email, blogs, and LinkedIn. [13,14,15,16,17,18]

Promotion entails interacting with consumers and showcasing information items and services. The

approach employed in a library to tell patrons about the services and resources offered there is known as promotion. This goal is to make sure that patrons are aware of the services and resources offered (Zhixian, 2016). These strategies include print and online advertising (mailouts, website announcements, booklets, brochures, and bookmarks), electronic techniques (e-mail, digital signage, screen savers, and alerts), giveaway items, and static marketing assets (pens, fridge magnets and water bottles). The library is promoted in a similar way by brochures, bulletins, posters, and advertisements for library goods and services. Since advertising costs money, social media like Facebook, Twitter, blogs, LinkedIn, email, and MySpace are strongly advised for quicker promotion of library information, products, and services. [19,20,21,22]

Information seekers now have a variety of options thanks to technology to satiate their information requirements. The traditional monopoly of libraries being the only sources of information has been broken. With the user community being able to access online information resources at any time of the day from wherever they are, new technology has presented librarians and information professionals with a significant challenge to survive and thrive in this digital age. The necessity to advertise libraries and information centers of all kinds is therefore greater than ever. Traditional marketing was time- and money-consuming and expensive. Online marketing has developed from this and is now time and money efficient. [22,23,24,25,26,27,28]

Users will benefit more from ICT use in marketing since it will give them a wider range of options for information sources and services. Information may now be accessed quickly and with the help of technology. As a result, consumers now favour using the internet instead of libraries to find information, posing a threat to libraries' continued survival. As a result, libraries must revamp their offerings to keep up with the information age. The way academic libraries sell their content and services to users must shift from a conventional approach to a digital one. If library patrons are not aware about the materials and services offered and do not ask for help using the library, they can stop using it, and as a result, they miss out on the knowledge that could have improved their academic performance. In turn, this will lead to underuse of academic libraries at universities. Therefore, the study determined the application of place and promotion marketing strategies to library and information services in public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria.

## 2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the application of marketing strategies to library and information services in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to

determine:

1. The application of place as a marketing strategy to library and information services in public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria.
2. The application of promotion marketing strategy to library and information services in public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria.

### 3. Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What place as a marketing strategy is applied to library and information services in public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria?
2. What promotion marketing strategy is applied to library and information services in public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria?

### Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Federal and state public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the application of place as a marketing strategy to library and information services.
2. Federal and state public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the application of apply promotion marketing strategy to library and information services.

Application of Place as a Marketing Strategy to Library and Information Services

Place represents the distribution channel through which a product/service is conveyed to the customer. It is usually associated with 'when', 'where' and 'how' a particular service/product is made available to the users/customers. Dhiman and Sharma (2009) described it as the time period, in which the service/product is provided, as the location of the services and as the type of distribution of the service or channels. Busari, Ayankola and Ladipo (2015) concluded could be through interpersonal delivery, group personal delivery, in-house dissemination, mass media, broadcasting, mail, telephone, strategic placement among others. As stated by Bamigbola (2013), place connotes that the products/services should be offered in a place that is reachable for the customers to easily access them. The information services should be rendered in a convenient place for the users. It is expected that the information services mentioned above are disseminated/distributed in a place whether physical place or virtual place. The place should be convenient for users to access because if the place is not convenient or accessible, it will pose emotional problems to users which will lead to reduction in the number of users of library services. Similarly, university library should expand service area

to where customers can easily access its information services. With computerized library it is envisaged that digital information services would be delivered in the right format at the right time and at the right place.

Application of Promotion Marketing Strategy to Library and Information Services

Promotion is essentially the means or ways of informing or persuading clientele on what one does and what one can do (Bamigbola, 2013). Promotion is one of the marketing mix strategies well known in library and information services. Traditionally, libraries promote its information services through display of new books, posters, exhibitions, bulletins, user orientation programmes, brochures to target groups, publicity and contact programmes and library outreach (Kaur & Rani, 2008). Today, promotion of library and information services has moved to a higher level because of information technological innovations. There are diverse ways employed by libraries to promote information services such as, using of e-mail to library users, library websites and usage of social networking tools (Vasileiou & Rowley, 2011). A very effective promotion is by word of mouth and Kutu and Olabode (2018) listed promotion marketing strategies for library and information services as word of mouth, display and exhibition, public lectures, library publication, extension and outreach programs, internet/web pages, advertising, personal skills, creating of conducive environment, and preparation of annual reports.

Display of book covers procured by library, providing open access to book collection, display of list of new arrivals with special attention, newspaper clippings, posters of databases subscribed, attractive signage's indicating library circulation counter, reference area, Internet cell to attract more and more users to library, were the quite common practices followed till recently (Mugdha, Swati & Satish, 2016). The time is changing and users want a change from all these routines as they are occupied in their work and wish to experience new tech enabled information and services on their hand held devices (Tamrakar & Garg, 2016). Additionally, several, social media sites, online application tools assist in many ways to promote library resources and services (Mugdha, Swati & Satish, 2016).

### 4. Methods

Descriptive survey design was adopted by this study. This study was carried out in public universities in Anambra State namely; Chukwuemeka Odumegwu University, Igbariam and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The population of 79 (51 librarians and 28 library officers) in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria were studied without sampling. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Application of Marketing Strategies to Library and Information Services (AMSLIS). The questionnaire contains 24 items in two sections, A and B. Section A

contains item on the demographic information of the respondents such ownership of university while section B is divided into two clusters of B1 to B4 structured on a four point rating scale of; Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

Face validity of the instrument was established using experts in Library and Information Science and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was established using trial-testing and calculation using Cronbach Alpha with coefficient values of 0.78 and 0.82 for clusters B1 to B2 respectively and overall value of 0.80 obtained. Mean, standard deviation and t-test were used for data analysis. The decision rule is that a hypothesis was accepted where the p-value is greater than the level of significance otherwise; the null hypothesis was accepted. The analysis was carried out using SPSS version 23.0.

## 5. Results

### Research Question 1

What place as a marketing strategy is applied to library and information services in public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria?

Data in table 1 show that out of the 11 items listed on place as a marketing strategy, respondents agree that five items (items 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11) are applied to library and information services with mean ratings ranging from 2.53 to 3.24 while they disagree that the remaining six items (items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) with mean scores ranging from 2.11 to 2.44 are applied to library and information services. The grand mean of 2.54 means that librarians and library officers agree that place as a marketing strategy is applied to library and information services in public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range which shows that the respondents are homogeneous in their opinions.

### Research Question 2

What promotion marketing strategy is applied to library and information services in public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria?

Data in table 2 show that out of the 13 promotion marketing strategy listed, respondents agree that items 12, 14, 18, 19, 22, 23 and 24 are applied to library and information services with mean ratings ranging from 2.86 to 3.34 while they disagree that the remaining six items (items 13, 15, 16, 17, 20 and 21) with mean scores ranging from 2.12 to 2.42 are applied to library and information services. The grand mean of 2.72 means that librarians and library officers agree that promotion marketing strategy are applied to library

and information services in public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range which shows that the respondents are homogeneous in their opinions.

### Hypothesis 1

Federal and state public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the application of place as a marketing strategy to library and information services.

Table 3 shows that the t - value of 2.26 with p-value of 0.13 is greater than the level of significance of 0.05 ( $0.13 > 0.05$ ) at 73 degree of freedom. This means that federal and state public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the application of place as a marketing strategy to library and information services. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

### Hypothesis 2

Federal and state public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the application of apply promotion marketing strategy to library and information services.

Table 4 shows that the t - value of 1.78 with p-value of 0.08 is greater than the level of significance of 0.05 ( $0.08 > 0.05$ ) at 73 degree of freedom. This means that federal and state public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the application of promotion marketing strategy to library and information services. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

## 6. Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study showed that librarians and library officers agree place as a marketing strategy is applied to library and information services in public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria. The findings of this study agree with that of Nwegbu (2010) which revealed that majority of items listed on place are applied in marketing library and information services in university libraries. The findings indicated that respondents disagree that they applied some items on place as a strategy. This could be attributed to so many factors such as limited budget, lack necessary facilities, and poor understanding of the use of place for marketing library services. Findings of this study revealed that federal and state public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the application of place as a marketing strategy to library and information services. the findings of this study corroborates with that of Samanian and Khosropanah (2016) which found that there was not any significance difference between universities under study in terms of distribution place and venues.



**Table 1: Respondents' mean ratings on application of place as a marketing strategy to library and information services (n = 75)**

S/N	Place as a marketing strategy	X	SD	Remarks
1	My library offer interpersonal delivery for users	2.24	0.88	Disagree
2	My library perform group personal delivery of services	2.11	0.85	Disagree
3	My library carry out in-house dissemination of services	2.26	0.79	Disagree
4	My library use mass media to create awareness of services to users	2.44	0.85	Disagree
5	My library use television in broadcasting their services to users	2.12	0.76	Disagree
6	My library offer bookmobiles or e-mail services to users	2.13	0.85	Disagree
7	My library carry out strategic placement of their services to improve user patronage	2.59	0.79	Agree
8	My library has branch library to expand the services	3.24	0.84	Agree
9	My library has new arrival shelves to improve efficiency in service delivery	3.22	0.87	Agree
10	My library designs and maintains strategic places in the library for displaying the new arrivals to users	3.11	0.89	Agree
11	My library has automated its circulation system for effective distribution of information resources and services	2.53	0.87	Agree
	Grand Mean	2.54		Agree

**Table 2: Respondents' mean ratings on application of promotion marketing strategy to library and information services (n = 75)**

S/N	Promotion marketing strategy	X	SD	Remarks
12	My library carry out display of new books to users	3.34	0.75	Agree
13	My library carry out pasting of posters and bulletins to create awareness of their services	2.12	0.88	Disagree
14	My library carry out display and exhibition of products and services to users	2.88	0.87	Agree
15	My library carry out user orientation programmes to increase user patronage	2.28	0.74	Disagree
16	My library give out brochures to target groups	2.36	0.82	Disagree
17	My library provide publicity and contact programmes and library outreach	2.45	0.74	Disagree
18	My library allows using of e-mail to library users	2.96	0.84	Agree
19	My library has library websites and social networking tools to enable users easily access its services	3.16	0.83	Agree
20	My library use word-of-mouth to advertise its products and services	2.46	0.82	Disagree
21	My library give public lectures on its products and services	2.42	0.80	Disagree
22	My library carry out library publications	2.86	0.83	Agree
23	My library has internet/web pages for advertising products and services	2.91	0.84	Agree
24	My library build clientele relationships to increase repeated patronage	3.20	0.71	Agree
	Grand mean	2.72		Agree

**Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of federal and state public university libraries on application of place as a marketing strategy to library and information services**

Ownership of university	N	X	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
Federal	51	2.83	0.85	73	2.26	0.13	Not Significant
State	24	2.48					

**Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of federal and state public university libraries on application of promotion marketing strategy to library and information services**

Ownership of university	N	X	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
Federal	51	3.05	0.88	73	1.78	0.08	Not Significant
State	24	2.50	0.89				

Findings of this study revealed that librarians and library officers agree that promotion marketing strategy are applied to library and information services in public university libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria. This finding is in line with the findings of Joseph (2019) which revealed that OPAC, the Web 2.0 and others promotion marketing strategies are applied by universities in marketing library and information services. This supports the earlier findings of Aderibigbe (2015) that universities used advertisement, displays, exhibitions, alert, use of billboards, orientation programmes, conferences, and library week for promotion of library and information services. Odine (2011) stated that lack of training in promotional marketing strategy, lack of effective communication between librarians and users and lack of media access to marketing of academic library services hinder effective application of marketing strategies to library and information services in public universities. The finding of this study further disclosed that federal and state public university libraries in South-East, Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the application of promotion marketing strategy to library and information services. This finding is in consonant with that of Samanian and Khosropanah (2016) which found that there was not any significance difference between universities on the use of promotion marketing strategy in marketing library and information services.

## 7. Conclusion

Based on these findings, the researcher concludes that a lot still need to be done by librarians and library officers to increase the application of marketing strategies to library and information services in order to attract and retain users.

## 8. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Library management in public universities should

expose librarians and library officers to marketing library services through regular trainings, conferences, seminars, workshop and symposiums. This will enable them to up-date their skills in the application of place and promotion marketing strategies to library and information services.

2. Marketing courses should be introduced in university education library's curriculum and should be made compulsory for library students. This will expose them to effective application of place and promotion marketing strategies to library and information services when employed after graduation.
3. Minimum standard should be set by National Library Association (NLA) for libraries in Nigeria. Also the NLA should set universal price for library services rendered to users.

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