MARKETING AS CORRELATE OF STUDENTS USE OF INFORMATION RESOURCES IN IMO STATE UNIVERSITY OWERRI AND COAL CITY UNIVERSITY, ENUGU LIBRARIES

BY

Ogechi N. Okorie[1] and Heman U. Osuagwu[2]
Department of Library and Science Information, Imo State University,
Owerri and Coal City University, Enugu
E-mail: 1ogechiokorie@imsu.edu.ng,
2hemanuche201@gmail.com

Abstract

The study is on marketing as correlate of use of information resources in Imo State University, Owerri and Coal City University, Enugu libraries. A correlation design was used. The population was five thousand and thirteen students. A sample of three hundred and seventy-one (371) students was determined using Taro Yamane's statistical formula. Four-point rating scale was used to collect data for the study and 0.82 reliability coefficient was derived. Pearson Product Moment-Correlation coefficient was used for data analysis while, t-test at a 0.05 level of significance was used to test the hypotheses. Results show that; there is a positive, high extent, and significant relationship between social media and students' use of information resources, and there is also a positive, very high extent, and significant correlation between user education and student' use of information resources in the university libraries studied. In conclusion therefore, there is a significant relationship between marketing of library resources and students' use of information resources. Based on this premise, the researchers recommended that, university libraries should create social media accounts in order to enhance its use as a marketing strategy. They should also embrace competitive intelligence and promote periodic user education programme for the entire user community.

Keywords: Marketing, Utilization, Information Resources, Social Media and User Education

Introduction

A library is the knowledge center of every nation or society, which makes information resources that are properly organized available for adequate utilization. According to Egbuchu and Osuagwu (2023), it is the institution that engages in selecting, acquiring, processing, storing, retrieving and disseminating information resources for use. It serves as a repository or data bank for information storage. Anyanwu (2016) further states that library is a collection of information resources that are made available to people for reference and lending purposes. These roles are observed in among other types of libraries, the university library.

University library is an information provision and storage center established in a university environment to aid the parent institution (university) achieve its predetermined objectives. It functions as an integral part of a university system with the responsibility of collecting, processing, organizing, disseminating and securing all sources of information in order to positively impact on academic and research culture of its immediate community, as well as meet the information needs of users (Ukwueze & Osuagwu, 2023). Anyanwu (2016) defined the university library as the live-wire of the university that helps members of the academic community to achieve teaching and learning objectives with the aid of information resources.

Information resources are the information bearing materials utilized by users in order to have access to their information needs. They are known as the library collection which can be in different formats. According to Akanwa (2016), library information resources are materials that are acquired, processed and kept for use by library clients. They constitute the wide range of information materials users' access for their information needs. Akanwa and Udo-Anyanwu (2017) classified these information resources into print, audio-visuals and Electronic Information Resources. While the print information resources are those that are in paper format, the audio-visuals are those that appeal to the sense of sight and hearing. The Electronic Information Resources (EIRs) are those in electronic format and can only be accessed via internet connection. In order to ensure adequate utilization of these information resources, effort is often made to create awareness of their availability. No wonder Obi and Nsirim cited in Ukwueze and Osuagwu (2023) noted that when users of a library are exposed to information resources available in a particular library, they stand a chance of accessing and utilizing them to satisfy their information needs. This can be achieved through marketing.

Marketing entails the process of creating awareness on the availability of certain products and services rendered by an individual, organization or institution for fee or free. It consists of individual organizational activities like creation, distribution, promotion and pricing of goods, services and ideas that facilitates and expedite satisfying exchange relationships in a dynamic environment. According to Adekunmisi (2013), marketing is the strategy taken by managements of organizations to identify, anticipate and supply customers' requirement efficiently. More so, due to changes in academic demands and the exploration of digital materials libraries need to use strategic marketing techniques to engage their target audience and convey the value they offer (Joshua & Michael, 2020). Marketing of information resources can be made known through several channels like newsletter, display and exhibition, social

media and user education, etc. This study is however limited to social media and user education as strategies for marketing information resources in libraries.

Social media is a computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts and information through the building of virtual networks and communities. It is becoming an indispensable tool used in libraries for improving services of the libraries (Uwandu & Osuji, 2022). By design, social media is Internet-based and gives users quick electronic communication of content such as personal information, documents, videos and photos. Users engage with social media via a computer, tablet, or Smartphone via web-based software or applications. Through social media handles like Facebook, WhatsApp, twitter, blogs, telegram etc, the resources of the university library are made known to the library users.

User education is also another major way of marketing library resources. It involves teaching the users on how to handle books and other resources, obeying library rules and regulations and how to make effective use of electronic or manual library catalogues and reference materials. Okorie (2016) opined that it is concerned with instructing and training users by the librarians to enable them make optimal use of the library information sources and services while, Ukwueze, Osuagwu and Ani (2022) stated that the sole objective of user education is to equip the university freshmen with the skills needed to navigate the library and make effective and efficient use of the collection and services of the library. User education can be done through library orientation, bibliographic instruction, formal classroom use of library course, issuing of handbooks, library tour and demonstration.

The place of marketing of library resources for user awareness and subsequent utilization cannot be overemphasized. Libraries implore marketing strategies such as display boards, creation of library websites, leaflets and posters, and even the use of social media and user education. It has been observed that users hardly use the library resources despite the marketing strategies adopted in the libraries. Could it be that the library resources are poorly marketed, that the marketing strategies adopted do not really portray the needful or could it be that users lack interest in the use of information resources? These are issues that cropped up the study.

Aims and objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to investigate the influence of social media and user education as marketing strategies for student's use of information resources in university libraries in Imo

and Enugu States. Specifically, the objectives of the study sought to:

1. ascertain the relationship between social media and use of information resources by students in the university libraries studied; and
2. determine the relationship between user education and students' use of information resources in the university libraries studied.

Research Questions

In line with the objectives, the following research questions were posed to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between social media and students' use of information resources in the university libraries studied?
2. What is the relationship between user education and students' use of information resources in the university libraries studied?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study at 0.05 significant levels:

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between social media and students' use of information resources in the university libraries studied.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between user education and student' use of information resources in the university libraries studied.

Literature Review

Social Media and Students Use of Information Resources

Social media are products of web-based or internet technologies that depend on online and mobile technologies to operate. Such products, Facebook, blogs, micro blogging, YouTube, twitter, Wikis, Mash Up, Digg, Delicious Second Life, wikis, RSS feeds, Flickr, Picasa, amongst others, are used to market information resources (Ekoja, 2011) and promote the use of library information resources and services. Social media make it easier for library users to be aware of information resources available in the library which in turn, attracts them to utilize these resources. According to Aslam (2018), librarians can develop relationship with the users through social media to promote each other's activities. He further states that social media is used to develop visibility, enhance the level of literacy, deliver personalized services that fulfill the present and future needs of patrons. Since, social media is not only channel for promoting libraries but also communication channel between students and libraries, librarians Masizana and Salubi (2022) asserted need to embrace digital marketing channels like social media, to

reach a larger audience and engage people outside of the library with a view to promoting the use of library resources. No wonder Akporhonor and Olise (2015) averred that social media promotes library resources and services which in turn increases library usage.

User Education and Use of Information Resources

Another marketing strategy for promoting use of information resources is user education also known as library instruction, bibliographic instruction, and library orientation. It is the process of teaching library users how to handle books and other resources, obey library rules and regulations and make effective use of the electronic or manual library materials. Okorie (2016) noted that user education increases students' academic performances in school as well as prepares them for continuous independent reading after school. It is important in the academic life of university students as it helps in teaching them library etiquettes, library rules and regulations, behaviors, conducts and library culture. Adeolu (2022), in a study, discovered that utilization of information resources and services is positive and had a significant relationship with user education among engineering undergraduates in private universities in Oyo State. Similarly, Okeke and Idoko (2018) and Oyeyemi and Adayi (2022) in their respective studies on user education and use of library resources revealed that, there is a significant positive relationship between user education and use of library resources among National Open University of Nigeria distance education students and the students of Federal Polytechnic, Idah. Furthermore, Olaniyi and Awujoola (2024) ascertained a positive and statistically significant relationship between user education and library use by undergraduates in University of Ibadan and Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria hence, a reason for their assertion that user education is one of the most efficient tools set up by libraries to facilitate library use. It is an essential means of getting new entrants familiarized with the university library and its numerous resources, in order to encourage their utilization of library and information resources in institutions of higher learning (Uhegbu cited in Ukwueze, Osuagwu & Ani, 2022)

Methodology

The researchers investigated social media and user education as correlate of students use of information resources in Imo State University, Owerri and Coal City University, Enugu libraries. A correlational design was adopted for the study. The population of the study is five thousand and thirteen (5,013) students. The sample size of the study is three hundred and seventy-one (371) registered users drawn using Taro Yamane's statistical formula. Four-point rating scale was used to collect data for the study. Pearson Product Moment-Correlation

Coefficient statistical formula was used to determine the coefficient of the correlation for the research questions while, t-test at 0.05 level of significance was adopted to test the hypotheses.

Results

The data analysis and presentation were done in line with the research questions.

Research question 1: What is the relationship between social media as a marketing strategy and students' use of information resources in the libraries studied?

Table 1: The coefficient of relationship between social media and Students' use of information resources

Variable	n	r	r^2	Remark
Students' use of information resources				
	371	0.806	0.650	Positive & HER
Social media				

As presented in Table 1, the coefficient of relationship between social media as marketing strategy and students' use of information resources is 0.806, while the coefficient of determination is 0.650. The coefficient of relationship positive and is within the range 0.61 – 0.80 for high extent of relationship. Hence, there is positive and high extent of relationship between social media as marketing strategy and students' use of information resources.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between social media and student' use of information resources in the university libraries studied.

Table 2: Summary t-values Table for Testing Hypothesis One

t_{Cal}	df	t_{Crit}	p	$\propto$
26.157	369	1.646	0.000	0.05

Data presented in Table 2 shows that the calculated t-value for testing Pearson r 26.157, is greater than the critical or tabulated value 1.646. Also, the obtained probability value 0.000 is less than the hypothesized probability value 0.05. Based on these observations, the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant relationship between marketing of library resources through social media and student' use of information resources in the university libraries studied is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. Therefore, There is a significant relationship between marketing of library resources through social media and student' use of information resources in the university libraries studied.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between user education as a marketing strategy

and students' use of information resources in the libraries under study?

Table 3: The relationship between library user education and Students' use of information resources

Variable	n	r	r^2	Remark
Students' use of information resources				
	371	0.867	0.752	Positive &VHER
Library User education				

      Data in the Table 3 shows that the relationship between library user education and students' use of information resources 0.867 is within the range $0.81 - 1.00$ for very high extent of relationship. Therefore, there is a positive and very high extent of relationship between library user education and students' use of information resources. The coefficient of determination 0.752 indicates that 75.20% of the variations in students' use of information resources is explained by the use library user education as a marketing strategy.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant correlation between user education and student' use of information resources in the university libraries studied.

Table 4: Summary t-values Table for Testing Hypothesis

t_{Cal}	df	t_{Crit}	p	$\propto$
33.422	369	1.646	0.000	0.05

      As presented in Table 4, the calculated t-value for testing Pearson r 33.422 is greater than the critical or tabulated value 1.646. Also, the obtained probability value 0.000 is less than the hypothesized probability value 0.05. Based on these observations, the null hypothesis 2 which states that, there is no significant correlation between user education in marketing library information resources and student' use of information resources in the university libraries studied is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. Therefore, there is significant correlation between the application of user education in marketing library information resources and student' use of information resources in the university libraries studied.

Discussion

There is positive and high extent of relationship between social media as a marketing strategy and students' use of information. There is a significant coefficient of relationship between social media and students' use of information resources. The coefficient of relationship is positive indicating that employing social media as a marketing strategy will improve students'

use of information resources. The statistical test carried out revealed that there is significant relationship between social media marketing of library services and student' use of information resources in the university libraries under study at significant level. Although the reason for this level of relationship is however not known, it could mean that for students' use of information resources to improve the library staff needs to improve in their use of social media as a marketing strategy. The importance of students' use of information resources can hardly be overemphasized in that it seriously indicates the functionality of the libraries, because that is the essence of establishing libraries in universities. Therefore, any library that desires to achieve its goals should be able to adopt various kinds of marketing strategies such as social media, so as to encourage students' use of the library information resources. This also means that increase in the use of social media as marketing strategy will directly and significantly influence students' use of information resources. This finding is in line with the findings of Ekoja (2011) who found a significant relationship between use of social media as marketing strategy and students' use of information resources. Also, Aslam (2018) stated that social media is used as a communication channel between students and libraries to create visibility, enhance the level of literacy and deliver personalized services that fulfills their present and future needs. All these are geared towards effective use of library information resources. Moreover, Akporhonor and Olise (2015) noted that social media promotes library resources and services which in turn increases library usage.

There is also a positive and very high extent of relationship between library user education and students' use of information resources. There is significant correlation between user education and student' use of information resources in the university libraries studied. The result of data analysis revealed that the coefficient of relationship also shows a positive relationship between library user education as a marketing strategy and students' use of information resources. This is reasonable because no one, not even students will use the library if they don't have good information about it. Hence, providing library user education in the universities will enhance the utilization of information resources by the students who are the major target of the university libraries. More finding of the study also showed that approximately seventy-five percent of the variations in students' use of information resources are explained by the use of user education as a marketing strategy. The statistical test carried out showed that there is significant correlation between user education as a strategy for marketing library resources and student' use of information resources in the university libraries studied at significant level. This finding is in line with the assertion by Olaniyi and Awujoola's (2024), that user education is

one of the most efficient tools set up by libraries to facilitate library use. It is also in tandem with results of the respective studies by Okeke and Idoko (2018); Oyeyemi and Adayi (2022) that there is a significant positive relationship between user education and use of library resources among National Open University of Nigeria distance education students and the students of Federal Polytechnic, Idah.

Conclusion

The results of the study highlight a positive, high extent and significant coefficient of relationship between social media as a marketing strategy and students' use of information. Similarly, it also features a positive, very high extent and significant coefficient of relationship between library user education and students' use of information resources. The importance of marketing in librarianship cannot be overemphasized. However, the whole effort of making the information resources available is defeated if the library information resources are not properly utilized. To ensure effective marketing of these library services so as to ensure adequate utilization, libraries adopt different marketing strategies. Such marketing strategies among others include social media, user education.

Recommendations

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

1. The various university libraries should create social media accounts in order to enhance its use as a marketing strategy, since this significantly influenced students' use of information resources.
2. The library needs to embrace competitive intelligence and promote periodic user education programme for the entire user community since this will significantly influence students' use of information resources.

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