

Marketing Strategies and Librarians' Competencies as Determinants of Effective Utilisation of Library Services and Products in Federal University Libraries in South-East Nigeria

Dr. Chimezie Damian **Ogbuabor**, CLN
Department of Library and Information Science UNN
Damian.ogbuabor@unn.edu.ng +234 8065024214

Dr. Anezi Leonard **Ezema**, CLN
Cataloguing and Classification Department
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike
ezema.anezi@mouau.edu.ng +234 8139160640
Orcid id: 0000-0002-2535-1099

Abstract

This study investigated marketing strategies and librarians' competencies as determinants of the effective utilisation of library services and products in federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria. Three research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. A descriptive cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 123 professional librarians from five federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria. Data were collected using a validated structured questionnaire titled Marketing Strategies and Librarians' Competencies as Determinants of Effective Utilisation of Library Services and Products (MSLCEULSP), which yielded an overall Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.95. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that organising user education programmes, developing library web pages, demonstrating digital library systems, providing email and SMS alerts, and organising exhibitions of newly acquired resources were the most important marketing strategies. Librarians demonstrated a moderate overall level of marketing competencies, although competencies in research, marketing knowledge, interpersonal communication, information and communication technology (ICT), and information dissemination were rated highly. The findings further revealed that librarians' marketing competencies contributed substantially to the effective utilisation of library services and products by improving users' awareness, access to information resources, communication, and resource utilisation. The hypothesis showed no statistically significant difference among the libraries regarding the contribution of librarians' competencies to effective utilisation ($F = 0.665$, $p = 0.617$). The study recommended continuous professional development, expanded digital marketing initiatives, and dedicated library marketing and outreach units.

Keywords: Marketing strategies; librarians' competencies; library services; effective utilisation; federal university libraries.

Introduction

University libraries play a pivotal role in supporting teaching, learning, research, and community engagement through the provision of diverse information resources and services. As centres of knowledge, they acquire, organise, preserve, and disseminate both print and electronic information resources to meet the information needs of students, researchers, and academic staff. According to Corral (2014), university libraries have evolved into dynamic knowledge hubs that facilitate access to scholarly information and promote academic excellence. Their effectiveness, however, is determined not only by the availability of these resources but also by the extent to which they are utilised. Consequently, the effective utilisation of library resources and services has become a key indicator of library performance and its contribution to the achievement of institutional goals within higher education (Tenopir et al., 2019).

The rapid advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has significantly transformed users' information-seeking behaviour. With the growing reliance on search engines, digital repositories, institutional repositories, and open-access resources, university libraries are confronted with increasing competition from alternative information providers. As Islam and Islam (2019) observed, this evolving information environment has made it imperative for libraries to adopt proactive marketing strategies that create awareness of available resources and services, demonstrate their value, and encourage their sustained utilisation. Consequently, marketing has become an integral component of contemporary library management, strengthening communication between libraries and their users while enhancing the visibility, accessibility, and utilisation of library resources and services (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

The effective marketing of library services depends largely on the competencies possessed by librarians. Beyond the traditional skills of librarianship, contemporary librarians are expected to demonstrate competencies in information retrieval, digital literacy, communication, social media engagement, content creation, user education, data management, and the application of information and communication technologies. These competencies enable librarians to understand users' information needs, design appropriate promotional programmes, utilise digital communication platforms effectively, and evaluate the effectiveness of marketing initiatives. Urhefe-Okotie (2023) argues that librarians' professional competencies have become critical determinants of successful library marketing programmes and the increased utilisation of library resources and services.

Marketing strategies adopted by university libraries include user orientation programmes, exhibitions, current awareness services, institutional websites, social media platforms, email alerts, information literacy instruction, public relations activities, and personalised information services. Kutu and Olajide (2018) observed that when these strategies are effectively implemented, they enhance users' awareness, strengthen user engagement, and promote greater utilisation of library resources and services. Similarly, Dada, Nwachukwu, and Babarinde (2025) argued that effective library marketing improves the visibility of information resources and encourages increased patronage. Enhanced utilisation not only maximises institutional investment in library collections and digital technologies but also contributes to improved teaching quality, research productivity, students' learning outcomes, and overall institutional excellence.

Despite substantial investment in library resources and digital infrastructure, many federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria continue to experience low patronage and underutilisation of their information resources, services, and products. Friday and Godfrey (2023)

attributed this situation to inadequate marketing practices, limited digital engagement, and deficiencies in librarians' marketing-related information competencies, all of which constitute significant barriers to effective library utilisation. As users increasingly rely on alternative digital information sources, it has become imperative to examine how librarians' marketing competencies and the marketing strategies adopted by university libraries influence the effective utilisation of library resources and services. Such an investigation will provide empirical evidence to inform strategies for strengthening library marketing practices, enhancing librarians' marketing-related information competencies, and improving the visibility, accessibility, and utilisation of library resources and services in federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

University libraries invest considerable resources in acquiring and providing diverse information resources and services to support teaching, learning, and research. Despite these investments, the utilisation of library resources and services in many federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria remains below expectation. The increasing reliance on freely accessible online information sources has further reduced users' dependence on library collections, making the effective marketing of library resources and services imperative. However, the success of library marketing depends largely on librarians possessing appropriate marketing-related information competencies, including communication, digital literacy, information management, user engagement, and promotional skills. In many university libraries, deficiencies in these competencies may hinder the effective implementation of marketing strategies, thereby contributing to low patronage and the underutilisation of valuable library resources and services. Although previous studies have examined library marketing and resource utilisation independently, there is limited empirical evidence on the strategies required to enhance the

acquisition and application of marketing-related information competencies among librarians in federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria. This gap in knowledge provides the rationale for the present study.

Methods

This study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive survey design and focused on a population of 123 professional librarians drawn from five federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled *Marketing Strategies and Librarians' Competencies as Determinants of Effective Utilisation of Library Services and Products (MSLCEULSP)*. The instrument was validated by two experts in Library and Information Science and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation, all from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's alpha (α), which yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.95, indicating a high level of internal consistency. The questionnaires were administered and retrieved by the researcher with the assistance of four trained research assistants. Descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation, were used to answer the research questions, while inferential statistics were employed to determine the contributions of librarians' competencies and marketing strategies to the effective utilisation of library services and products. All statistical tests were conducted at the 0.05 level of significance.

Research question

1. What marketing strategies do librarians employ to promote the utilisation of library services and products in federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria?
2. What marketing-related information competencies are possessed by librarians for the effective marketing of library services and products in federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria?

3. To what extent do librarians' marketing-related information competencies contribute to the effective utilisation of library services and products in federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria?

Hypothesis

H₀: Librarians' marketing-related information competencies do not significantly contribute to the effective utilisation of library services and products in federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

The increasing complexity of contemporary information environments has positioned marketing as a strategic function within university libraries. Marketing is no longer regarded merely as the promotion of library resources; rather, it is recognised as a systematic process of identifying users' information needs, communicating the value of available resources and services, and fostering sustained engagement with library offerings. Kotler and Keller (2016) define marketing as a managerial and social process through which value is created and exchanged to satisfy both organisational and customer needs. Within the context of university libraries, marketing serves to bridge the gap between information resources and users by creating awareness, stimulating interest, and promoting the continuous utilisation of library resources, products, and services.

Marketing strategies refer to the systematic approaches adopted by libraries to communicate the value of their resources and services and to ensure their effective delivery to users. These strategies encompass a wide range of promotional activities, including publicity, public relations, user orientation programmes, exhibitions, social media marketing, library websites, current awareness services (CAS), selective dissemination of information (SDI), email

alerts, posters, newsletters, and information literacy programmes. According to Kutu and Olajide (2018), effective marketing requires careful planning, strategic implementation, and continuous evaluation to ensure that library services reach their intended users and achieve the desired outcomes. Similarly, Aeribibigbe and Farouk (2017) identified publicity, public relations, noticeboard announcements, and institutional image-building initiatives as practical strategies for enhancing library visibility and strengthening user engagement. With the rapid advancement of digital technologies, library marketing has increasingly shifted towards online platforms, enabling libraries to extend their reach beyond physical boundaries, improve interaction with users, and respond more effectively to evolving information-seeking behaviours.

The effectiveness of these marketing strategies depends largely on the competencies possessed by librarians. The role of librarians has evolved from that of custodians of information resources to information professionals responsible for promoting, facilitating, and sustaining access to scholarly information. Consequently, effective marketing requires competencies that extend beyond the traditional functions of librarianship. These competencies include effective communication, digital literacy, information management, customer relationship management, social media proficiency, advocacy, content creation, and the ability to analyse users' information needs. Innocent (2017) observed that librarians' willingness and capacity to market library services significantly influence the success of marketing initiatives. Similarly, Esan, Ambrose, and Unuabor (2024) argued that librarians' active involvement and professional competence are critical determinants of the effectiveness of library marketing programmes. In the contemporary information environment, librarians who possess strong digital, marketing, and interpersonal competencies are better equipped to promote library resources and services, enhance user

engagement, and respond effectively to the changing information needs and expectations of their users.

Effective utilisation refers to the extent to which users successfully access and apply library services and information resources to support teaching, learning, and research activities. Information utilisation is achieved when users are aware of available resources, possess the necessary skills to access them, and consistently incorporate them into their academic and research activities. Okan and Umoh (2014) argue that awareness of library resources is a prerequisite for effective utilisation, while Ofodile and Ifejeh (2013) attribute the underutilisation of university library resources to inadequate marketing, insufficient user education, limited awareness, and restricted access to current information. These observations suggest that the mere availability of information resources does not guarantee their effective utilisation. Rather, effective utilisation depends on deliberate marketing initiatives, sustained user awareness programmes, and librarians who possess the requisite marketing-related information competencies to promote library resources and services effectively.

The relationship between marketing strategies, librarians' competencies, and the effective utilisation of library services and products is complementary. Marketing strategies provide the channels through which information about library services is communicated to users, while librarians' competencies determine the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of these marketing efforts. Libraries that combine innovative marketing approaches with professionally competent librarians are more likely to enhance user awareness, increase patronage, improve user satisfaction, and maximise the utilisation of available resources and services. Conversely, ineffective marketing practices and inadequate professional competencies diminish the visibility of library resources and services, resulting in low patronage and underutilisation despite substantial institutional

investment. Therefore, strengthening librarians' marketing-related competencies alongside the adoption of effective marketing strategies is essential for improving the utilisation of library resources and services in federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria.

Findings

Research Question 1: What are the marketing strategies needed by librarians for library services and products?

Table 1: Mean Responses of Respondents on Strategies Librarians Currently Use or need to Adopt in Promoting Library Services and Products in Federal university Libraries in South-East Nigeria

SN		School					Overall		R	D
		MOU AU Mean	NAU Mean	FUNAI Mean	UNN Mean	FUTO Mean	Mean	SD		
1	Use of exhibitions and displays of newly acquired library resources.	3.74	3.58	2.80	3.55	3.50	3.54	.65	5 th	HN
2	Organisation of user education programmes.	3.68	3.50	4.00	3.65	3.69	3.67	.56	1 st	HN
3	Use of library publications for service promotion.	2.89	3.17	2.80	3.15	3.25	3.12	.73	11 th	MN
4	Use of electronic media for marketing library services.	3.37	3.17	3.80	3.45	3.47	3.43	.66	7 th	MN
5	Use of library outreach and extension services.	3.42	3.17	3.60	3.38	3.47	3.40	.65	8 th	MN
6	Word-of-mouth promotion.	2.89	2.67	2.20	3.00	3.22	2.97	.68	13 th	MN
7	Use of the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC).	4.74	3.50	3.20	3.00	2.84	3.32	2.95	10 th	MN
8	Use of the library website and library blogs.	2.79	2.58	2.60	3.15	2.53	2.81	1.12	14 th	MN
9	Distribution of leaflets, flyers, and posters.	3.11	2.83	2.60	3.03	3.03	3.00	.71	12 th	MN
10	Sending personalised messages to users via email and text messaging services.	3.63	3.50	3.20	3.55	3.56	3.55	.63	4 th	HN
11	Creation and maintenance of a dedicated library webpage.	3.84	3.58	3.80	3.60	3.66	3.66	.53	2 nd	HN
12	Demonstration of library information systems, including OPAC, CD-ROM databases, email services, Internet resources, and online information services.	3.63	3.42	3.80	3.63	3.44	3.56	.63	3 rd	HN
13	Preparation and distribution of brochures, pamphlets, and user guides to target user groups.	3.32	3.25	3.00	3.50	3.28	3.35	.55	9 th	MN

14	Organisation of Library Week and other promotional events.	3.58	3.67	3.00	3.48	3.47	3.49	.68	6 th	MN
Cluster Mean		3.47	3.26	3.17	3.36	3.31	3.35	.84	MN	

KEY: HN = HIGHLY NEEDED; MN = MODERATELY NEEDED; LN LESS NEEDED; NN = NOT NEEDED, MOUAU= Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Library Umudike, NAU=Prof Festus Agbogbo Nwankwo library Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, FUNAI=Federal University Ndufu Ikwo Library Ebonyi, Nnamdi Azikiwe library, UNN=University of Nigeria Nsukka, FUTO=Federal University of Technology Owerri

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that the strategies listed as Items 2, 11, 12, 10, and 1, with corresponding mean scores of 3.67, 3.66, 3.56, 3.55, and 3.54 respectively, were rated as highly needed by librarians for the effective marketing of library services and products. Among these, organising user education recorded the highest mean score ($\bar{x} = 3.67$, $SD = 0.56$), making it the most highly rated strategy. The remaining strategies, listed as Items 14, 4, 5, 13, 7, 3, 9, 6, and 8, with mean scores of 3.49, 3.43, 3.40, 3.35, 3.32, 3.12, 3.00, 2.97, and 2.81 respectively, were considered moderately needed by the respondents. Furthermore, the findings show that while organising user education ranked highest, the use of library websites and library blogs recorded the lowest mean score ($\bar{x} = 3.35$, $SD = 0.84$) among the identified strategies. Overall, the cluster mean of 3.35, which falls within the real limit of 2.50–3.49, indicates that the identified strategies are moderately needed by librarians for the effective marketing of library services and products to enhance information utilisation.

Research Question 2: What are the information competencies possessed by librarians in marketing library services and products?

Table 2: Mean Responses of Respondents on the Current Level of Information Competencies Possessed by Librarians in Marketing Library Services and Products in Federal University Libraries in South-East Nigeria.

SN		School					Overall		R	D
		MOUAU	NAU	FUNAI	UNN	FUTO	Mean	SD		
1	Ability to conduct research effectively.	3.74	3.75	3.80	3.73	3.59	3.69	.50	1st	HP
2	Good interpersonal skills.	3.63	3.42	3.40	3.50	3.63	3.55	.62	4th	HP
3	Ability to respond effectively to users' enquiries.	3.42	3.42	3.60	3.53	3.63	3.53	.65	6th	MP
4	Ability to study the information needs and behaviour of library users.	3.47	3.67	2.60	3.13	3.41	3.31	.80	8th	MP

5	Ability to share professional knowledge and ideas with colleagues globally.	3.26	3.33	3.40	3.30	3.53	3.37	.71	7 th	MP
6	Ability to respond promptly to emerging issues.	2.95	2.25	2.00	2.93	2.78	2.77	1.03	11 th	MP
7	Effective communication skills.	2.95	3.25	3.20	2.90	3.16	3.04	1.03	9 th	MP
8	Ability to promote and market library services effectively.	2.89	2.75	2.60	2.83	2.75	2.80	.81	10 th	MP
9	Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills.	3.79	3.67	3.60	3.38	3.56	3.55	.78	4 th	HP
10	Ability to disseminate the right information to the right users at the appropriate time.	3.89	3.67	4.00	3.43	3.72	3.65	.70	3 rd	HP
11	Knowledge of marketing principles, techniques, and strategies.	3.74	3.67	3.80	3.68	3.63	3.68	.53	2 nd	HP
Cluster Mean		3.43	3.35	3.27	3.30	3.40	3.36	.64	MP	

Key: HP = Highly possessed; MP = Moderate possessed; LP = Less possessed; NP = Not possessed, MOUAU= Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Library Umudike, NAU=Prof Festus Agbogbo Nwankwo library Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, FUNAI=Federal University Ndufu Ikwo Library Ebonyi, Nnamdi Azikiwe library, UNN=University of Nigeria Nsukka, FUTO=Federal University of Technology Owerri

The results presented in Table 2 indicate that the information competencies listed as Items 1, 11, 10, 2, 9 and 3, namely the ability to conduct research, knowledge of marketing, interpersonal skills, customer relationship management, communication skills, and digital literacy, with corresponding mean scores of 3.69, 3.68, 3.65, 3.55, 3.55 and 3.53, respectively, are highly possessed by the librarians. The remaining competencies, listed as Items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 12, recorded moderate mean scores, indicating that they are moderately possessed by the respondents. Furthermore, the overall analysis revealed that the ability to conduct research ($\bar{x} = 3.69$, $SD = 0.50$) ranked highest among the identified information competencies, whereas the ability to respond promptly to users' enquiries ($\bar{x} = 2.77$, $SD = 1.03$) ranked lowest. The cluster mean of 3.38, which falls within the real limits of 2.50–3.49, indicates that librarians generally possess marketing-related information competencies to a great extent for the effective marketing of library services and products in federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria.

Research Question 3: To what extent librarians' competencies in marketing library and information services contribute to the effective utilization of library services and products in federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean Responses of Respondent on Extent Librarians' Competencies in Marketing Contribute the effective utilization of library products and services in federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria

SN		School					Overall		R	D
		MOUAU	NAU	FUNAI	UNN	FUTO	Mean	SD		
1	Enabling users to stay and utilize library resources up to late hours.	3.58	3.33	3.80	3.53	3.47	3.51	.60	5 th	VHE
2	Enabling users to use library resources effectively.	3.42	3.50	3.20	3.48	3.56	3.48	.74	6 th	HE
3	Making users to appreciate the importance of library services and products.	3.58	3.33	3.40	3.45	3.44	3.45	.80	9 th	HE
4	Helping users to find it difficult to access library resources.	1.84	1.92	3.20	2.35	2.47	2.29	1.04	13 th	LE
5	Users now save their time when looking for information.	3.53	3.33	3.40	3.53	3.44	3.47	.60	7 th	HE
6	Users cannot make independent use of library resources.	1.95	2.25	2.20	2.30	1.94	2.12	1.05	15 TH	LE
7	Users now know the basic rules and regulations governing use of library resources.	3.63	3.75	3.00	3.55	3.44	3.53	.70	3 rd	VHE
8	It is now hard to contact librarians for more clarification and assistant when it in difficulty.	3.68	3.50	3.40	3.53	3.59	3.56	.63	2 nd	VHE
9	It promotes mutual understanding between librarians and user which resulted effective service delivery.	3.32	3.25	3.80	3.45	3.59	3.46	.65	8 th	HE
10	It is very stressful for users to find relevant information resources and services with ICTs skills.	3.32	3.33	3.40	3.35	3.50	3.39	.67	10 th	HE
11	Its boosted the users level of utilization of resources and services in the library.	3.42	3.33	3.80	3.60	3.50	3.52	.63	4 th	VHE
12	Users now know what library resources can meet their information needs.	3.05	3.17	3.20	3.18	3.22	3.17	.66	11 th	HE
13	Users do not know the duties and functions of different divisions and sections in the library.	2.47	2.42	2.00	2.48	2.38	2.42	.87	12 th	LE
14	Users now know where he can go for help in the library.	3.68	3.50	3.80	3.73	3.56	3.65	.62	1 st	VHE
15	Many users become afraid to visit library.	2.32	2.25	2.20	1.78	2.22	2.07	1.03	16 th	LE
Cluster mean		3.07	2.98	3.15	3.11	3.10	3.09	.76	HE	

Key: VHE = Very high extent; HE = High extent; LE = Low extent; VLE = Very low extent, MOUAU= Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Library Umudike, NAU=Prof Festus Agbogbo Nwankwo library Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, FUNAI=Federal University Ndufu Ikwo Library Ebonyi, Nnamdi Azikiwe library, UNN=University of Nigeria Nsukka, FUTO=Federal University of Technology Owerri

The result in Table 3 indicated that professional competencies on marketing to very high extent contributes to users' effective utilization of library services and products in the areas of:

users knowing where he can go for help in the library ($\bar{X}=3.65$, $SD=.62$), it is now hard to contact librarians for more clarification and assistant when it in difficultly ($\bar{X}=3.56$, $SD=.63$), users knowing basic rules and regulations governing use of library resources ($\bar{X}=3.53$, $SD=.70$) and boosting the users level of utilization of resources and services in the library ($\bar{X}=3.52$, $SD=.63$) and enabling users to stay and utilize library resources up to late hours($\bar{X}=3.51$, $SD=.60$) . Furthermore, the overall mean showed that users knowing where he can go for help in the library ($\bar{X}=3.65$, $SD=.62$) is ranked highest, while Many users become afraid to visit library ($\bar{X}=2.07$, $SD=1.03$) is ranked lowest as regard to extent professional competencies on marketing has contributed to users' effective utilization of library services and products in the university libraries. Generally, the cluster mean value of 3.09 which is within the real limit of 2.50-3.49; indicates that professional competencies on marketing has contributed to users' effective utilization of library services and products in the university to a high extent.

Ho1: Librarians' competencies in marketing library and information services do not significantly contribute to the effective utilisation of library products and services in federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria.

Table 4: ANOVA Analysis of extent professional competencies on marketing has contributed to users' effective utilisation of library services and products among university libraries

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.567	4	.142	.665	.617
Within Groups	21.951	103	.213		
Total	22.519	107			

Table 4 presents the results of a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) conducted to determine the extent to which professional competencies in marketing have contributed to users' effective utilisation of library services and products in federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria. The analysis revealed that there was no statistically significant difference among the

respondents' mean ratings, as the ANOVA result was not significant at the 0.05 level, $F(4, 103) = 0.665$, $p = .617$. Since the p-value (.617) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents regarding the extent to which professional marketing competencies have contributed to the effective utilisation of library services and products in federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria.

Discussion of findings

Marketing Strategies Used by Librarians in Promoting the Utilisation of Library Services and Products in Federal University Libraries in South-East Nigeria

The findings indicate that librarians employ a variety of marketing strategies to enhance the utilisation of library services and products, with user education programmes, library webpages, demonstrations of digital library systems, personalised email and SMS alerts, and exhibitions of newly acquired resources emerging as the most widely adopted approaches. These findings are consistent with those of Igbokwe (2019), who reported that orientation programmes, library displays, and internet-based services improve users' awareness and utilisation of library resources. Similarly, Ivunu (2019) observed that regular book exhibitions enhance the visibility of library collections, while Kolo (2020) found that internet-based services and user education significantly promote library patronage. The findings further suggest that effective marketing requires sustained user engagement, adequate funding, continuous staff development, and strong institutional support. Furthermore, strengthening digital marketing initiatives and conducting regular evaluations of users' feedback and resource utilisation statistics will enhance the visibility of library services, improve the utilisation of information resources, and strengthen overall service delivery in federal university libraries.

Information Competencies Possessed by Librarians in Marketing Library Services and Products in Federal University Libraries in South-East Nigeria.

The findings revealed that librarians in federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria possess a moderate level of information competencies required for the marketing of library services and products. Competencies such as research skills, marketing knowledge, and interpersonal communication were highly rated, indicating that librarians possess a sound foundation for promoting library resources and engaging library users. This finding is consistent with earlier studies, which identified communication skills, user-centred research, and marketing knowledge as essential competencies for effective library marketing (Singh & Meera, 2019). However, competencies relating to prompt responsiveness, analytical thinking, and information literacy were only moderately developed, suggesting the existence of competency gaps that may limit the effective promotion of library services within the rapidly evolving digital information environment. The findings therefore highlight the need for continuous professional development and capacity-building programmes aimed at strengthening librarians' strategic marketing competencies and enhancing the effective utilisation of library services and products.

Extent Librarians' Competencies in Marketing Library and Information Services Contribute to the Effective Utilisation of Library Products and Services in South-East Nigeria

The findings revealed that marketing-related professional competencies are essential for enhancing the effective utilisation of library services and products. Competencies such as user education, information retrieval, communication, ICT proficiency, and marketing communication equip librarians to promote library resources effectively, respond to users' information needs, and improve access to information. This finding is consistent with Friday and Godfrey (2023), who reported that librarians' positive perceptions and attitudes towards the marketing of library products and services are crucial for increasing library usage and enhancing users' awareness and

satisfaction in university libraries. The finding also corroborates that of Mambo (2026), who asserted that marketing competencies enable librarians to communicate the value of library services more effectively, thereby increasing patronage and optimising resource utilisation. Overall, the findings underscore that librarians' marketing-related competencies are indispensable for improving the visibility, accessibility, and effective utilisation of library services and information products within university libraries.

Recommendations

1. Each federal university library in South-East Nigeria should establish a Library Marketing and Outreach Unit responsible for designing, implementing, and evaluating marketing strategies. The unit should collaborate closely with ICT personnel, academic departments, and students to ensure that library resources and services are effectively promoted and tailored to users' information needs.
2. Federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria should adopt integrated marketing communication strategies to enhance the visibility and utilisation of their resources and services. Such strategies should include regular user education and orientation programmes, the maintenance of functional and up-to-date library websites, the effective use of social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram, the distribution of brochures and flyers, the organisation of annual Library Week activities, and the publication of newsletters, blogs, and library guides. These initiatives should be aligned with users' information needs and the academic calendar to maximise their effectiveness.
3. University administrations in South-East Nigeria should give greater priority to adequate budgetary provision for library development. Sufficient funding should be allocated to

support marketing initiatives, the acquisition of ICT infrastructure and digital communication tools, as well as the continuous professional development of librarians through training programmes. Furthermore, university libraries should actively explore external funding opportunities through research grants, development partners, donor agencies, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to strengthen their marketing capacity and enhance service delivery.

Conclusion

The study established that effective marketing strategies and the professional competencies of librarians are fundamental to improving the utilisation of library services and products in federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria. Although librarians demonstrated a moderate overall level of marketing-related competencies, competencies in research, information and communication technology (ICT), communication, and marketing knowledge significantly enhanced users' awareness and utilisation of library resources. User education programmes, library websites, digital system demonstrations, and electronic communication emerged as the most effective marketing strategies. The absence of significant differences among the universities suggests that the challenges and opportunities associated with library marketing are similar across the institutions studied. Therefore, strengthening librarians' professional competencies through continuous professional development, investing in digital marketing technologies, and institutionalising structured marketing programmes will enhance the visibility of library services, increase patronage, and maximise the utilisation of library resources and services in support of teaching, learning, and research.

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