Facilities Used for Marketing Information Resources and Services in Medical Libraries of Public Universities in North-West Nigeria

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Abstract
The paper examined the facilities used to market information resources and services in medical libraries of public universities in the North-west Nigeria. A sample of 365 students were identified and four heads of medical libraries were purposely selected and survey research design was used for the study. The findings revealed that the only platform considered most effective for marketing the available information resources and services are the notice boards, followed by newspapers and magazines. The least available platform is the radio program. The notice board, library website, newspapers, and social media are the most useful facilities for marketing in the libraries. The major challenges surrounding the use of library facilities were the absence of adequate funding and lack of sufficient facilities, among others. The paper concludes that the medical libraries should wake up and ensure the maximum use of available facilities for effective and efficient use of their information resources and services. Therefore, it is recommended that there is a need to provide good facilities and ensure its utilization to facilitate the effective use of information resources and services. A provision should made for adequate funds to provide the relevant facilities for marketing in the medical libraries.

Keywords: Facilities, marketing facilities, information resources and services

Introduction
Information is a product of data being processed, manipulated and organized in a manner that contributes to the recipient's knowledge. It is a force for change, which is becoming as important as life it-self (Chimah &Nwokocha, 2013).*Medical libraries as opined by (Unobe, 2015) are no different and aim to provide for the information needs of their target users (medical professionals, student or patients), both generally and exclusively.* In a nutshell, medical libraries are libraries found in academic institutions, hospitals, and health-related institutions with the aim of

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providingfor the information needs of a specialized group of people within the institutions or the hospitals they are situated at. Marketing on the other hand, as opined by Abdul salami and Salami (2013), may refer to satisfying human needs when it comes to the library; it means meeting the information needs of the library users. The benefits of marketing as highlighted by *Dongardive (2013:229) include a good reputation, good facilities, high service standards, helping to accelerate the elimination of obstacles, being business-like and having users led librarians. Moreover, library* facilities in this study can be applied to any conventional means or symbols or conducive environment that will inspire the users to patronize the resources as well as services or facilitate its dissemination to the target users.

Statement of the Problem

The role of marketing practice cannot be overemphasized. Marketing consists of the processes that bring people, technology, methods, techniques, and environment together for the provision of information resources and services to the users(Gupta and Savard, 2010).From the foregoing, it can therefore be concluded that marketing of libraries involves the process of identifying users and their information needs, with a view to providing for these needs. According to Patil and Pradhan, (2014)libraries adopt marketing practices in their operations to attract more users and to meet their information needs effectively, and to overcome the challenges of budgetary cuts, the application of information and communication technologies in terms of hardware/software license and maintenance, information explosion, networking demand, emergence of multiplicity of users, and rising cost of information resources etcetera. *The benefits of marketing as identified by Dongardive, (2013) include a good reputation, good facilities, high service standards, helping to accelerate the elimination of obstacles, being business-like and having users led librarians.*

However, it has been observed that the students and medical professionals do not use the information resources and services as they are supposed to. The reason is not far-fetched as the libraries lack relevant facilities in libraries that would facilitate access to the available resources and services. This argument was supported by Anyaoku, (2015) who noted that most students do not use medical libraries because computer/internet services and a lack of current material are absent. Edewor, Amughoro, Ossuchukwu and Egreajena, (2016) revealed that lack of facilities, low use of social media, lack of funds, absence of marketing plan, and not knowing what to market were some of the challenges for marketing in the libraries. Hence, the libraries would market their resources and services effectively and efficiently with proper facilities in place. Against this background, the study sought to investigate

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the facilities used for the marketing of information resources and services by medical libraries in the North-west, Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The research is about the facilites used for marketing information resources and services in the medical libraries uder study and how they will be improved. The aim of the study is to identify the facilities used for marketing information resources and services in public universities in the North-west Nigeria. *The specific objectives of the study are to:*

1. To identify the available facilities used for marketing information resources and services in medical libraries of public universities in the North-west, Nigeria.
2. *To determine the* useful of the facilities used in marketing of information resources and services in medical libraries

Research Questions

1. What facilities are available to facilitate the marketing of resources and services in medical libraries, and
2. How useful are facilities for informing users about the resources and services in medical libraries?

Review of Related Literature

Marketing is an approach to sharing knowledge; it synthesizes information into a present for library users to open and utilize promptly (Kennedy and LaGuardia, 2017). According to Ogola and Otike, (2011) marketing is a continual and dynamic process. The needs of the clients change with time and the library services and resources vary in accordance with the changing information environment. In other words, it is the process that concerns with the careful planning that entails breakdown of the clients' needs and a method of rewarding/satisfying those needs (Ogola& Otike, 2011).*Kennedy & LaGuardia, (2017) highlighted the benefit of marketing which include enabling libraries to display their value and enabling the libraries to communicate that they understand the value of the resources the library has and that they are disseminating that value to their users.*

On the other hand, a facility may refer to services or pieces of equipment provided for a purpose (Catherine & Angus, 2004). In other words, facilities in this study can be applied to any conventional means or symbols or conducive environment that will inspire the users to patronize the resources as well as services or facilitate its dissemination to the target users. Schmidt, (2006) opined that

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libraries and information centres couldcopy from some services organizations such as supermarkets, restaurants and internet cafes, an airport, shops,banks.Specific workplace for quick searching, automated loan machines, and view specialist study spaces with secured desks for the postgraduate students, coffee joint facilities and computer workstations for training users on various aspects of computing and related skillshave to be included.The previous submission bySchmidt,(2006) indicated that libraries in general, especially, medical libraries ought to emulate some services organizations such as banks and supermarkets. Thus providing the relevant facilities that will make the use of their resources and services convenient as well as make users comfortable. Marketing is about either retaining existing clientsor attracting the potential clients to continue to patronize the library which can onlybe achieved when there are aconducive atmosphere and the requisite facilities. Then the clients would be attracted to use the library and its resources consistently.

Chamberlain and Brook, (2011) added that health libraries conducted a marketing campaign focused on time-saving services and is entirely multidisciplinary, using notice boards and staffed canteen displays. Also, notices were posted around the library, stressing that staff members were willing to assist and request users to respect other users' right to study in a friendly atmosphere. The availability of these facilities in place would make the usage of the library resources and services amusing to the clients and they will be encouragedto patronize the library services consistently.

Consequently, Odine, (2011) noted that a good and friendly environment is needed to market library services effectively. To efficiently market a library's services, librarians should strive to provide an entirely reading and study atmosphere. *Thus, medical librarians should employ these facilities to make their libraries a very comfortable place for learning and research that attract all categories of clients to patronize the library and its resources and services enormously*. However, there are users who do not want to have a silent library environment. Therefore, the library should consider providing an alternative for such users, for example, a musical, or viewing centre so that all user needs and interests should be served accordingly. Osinulu, Adekunmisi, Okewale, and Oyewusi,(2018) opined that the library settings should be better. For instance, there should be enough reading space, seats, tables, restrooms and proper ventilation, orderly and noiseless library environments, clean toilet facilities, lighting, training programs, the use of highly innovative library technology, applications and services and innovative marketing strategies.

From the preceding, facilities refer to anything that will make access to information resources and services much more comfortable, convenient and enjoyable or facilitate its dissemination to the target users. Therefore, for efficient

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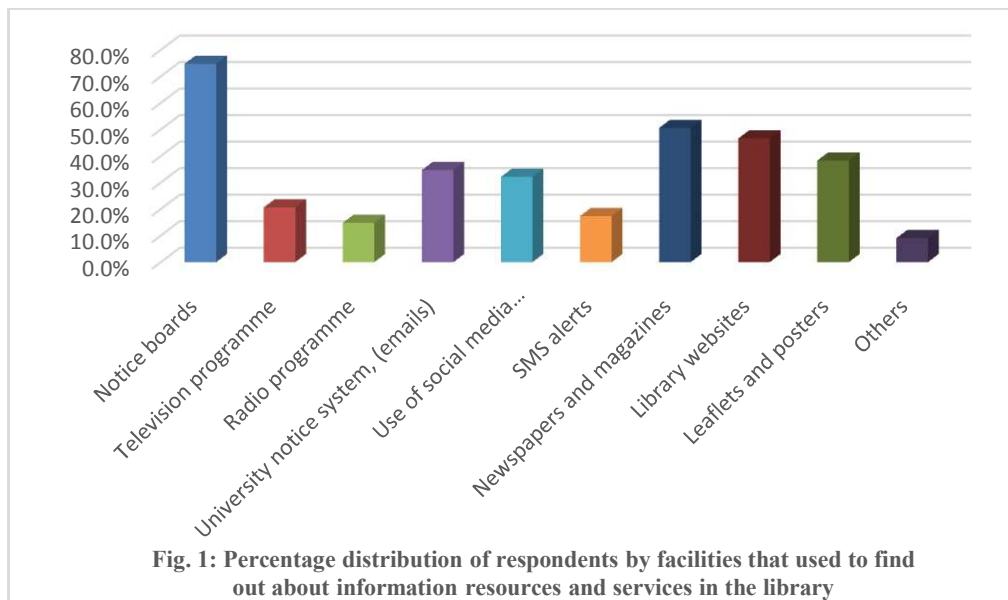**Mudassir Abule Abubakar BA, MLS (BUK)**

marketing of information resources and services to medical students and professionals, relevant conventional and sophisticated facilities need to be deployed in the medical libraries. *Consequently, the available literature reviewed showed that not much had been written on the facilities for marketing information resources and services. Also, some of these facilities are accessible in developed countries; however, in developing countries, like Nigeria, these facilities are not accessible due to inadequate funding and the dearth of some critical infrastructural facilities such as a stable power supply and bandwidth. This shows that a gap exists in the literature about facilities for library resources and services marketing in developing countries and specifically in Africa. Hence, this is what the present study sought to address.*

Methodology

Survey research designedand explanatory sequential mixed methods research were considered appropriate for this research hence were used for the sudy. The total pouplation is 6644students and a sample of 365 studnts was derived using Krejcie and Morgan(1970) formula.The researher administer 365 questionnaireto medical students in four public universities and interviewed four heads of medical libraries in the same universities in the North-west, Nigeria.The quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Scoial Sciences (IBM-SPSS)software version 21.0 and the interview was recorded, coded and analyzed using NVivo software.

The Presentation of Research Results and the Discussion of Findings

The research question on this theme sought to solicit the opinions of students and heads of medical libraries in order to assess the facilities that help students to find out about information resources and services in the medical libraries. This is because a good and conducive environment is needed in order to market library services effectively. Likewise, to market library resources librarians ought to provide a comfortable atmosphere for reading and learning (Odine, 2011). Their responses were drawn from both the medical students and heads of the medical libraries to see if they had similar opinions or not. Figure 1 below shows the students' responses about the facilities available for marketing the available information resources and services in the libraries

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Fig. 1: Percentage distribution of respondents by facilities that used to find out about information resources and services in the library

The only platform considered most effective for the marketing of the available information resources and services of the libraries as indicated in figure: 1 are the notice boards (207 or 75% of respondents). Close to half or 140(51%) students were of the view that they used newspapers and magazines in the libraries. In the hierarchy of available facilities is the library websites by 129(47%), followed by leaflets and posters by 106(38%) respondents. The least available platform considered for marketing available information resources and services of the libraries is the radio program as indicated by 41(15%) of respondents.

Interviewees were also asked about their opinion on the facilities for marketing information resources and services in the library. One of the participants was of the opinion that library facilities were available for marketing of information resources and services. One interviewee noted that:

> The library used facilities such as notice boards to communicate vital information about the library and its resources. The library also used the contacts of the students in WhatsApp accounts or student e-mails, bulletins, newspapers and magazines to inform the users of the latest developments in terms of new resources, services and any other vital information.[This clearly shows that, the medical libraries used a range of facilities

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like notice boards, social media and the like to market
their resources and services to users].

Another interviewee revealed that the library has a specific location where books, posters and banners were placed for marketing purposes. They sensitized users during what they referred to as sensitization week on developments in the library like new arrivals of resources, services and much more. The librarians attended meetings with faculty members and used this forum to promote library services such as printing and distribution of posters and circulating of handbills and the like. The participants revealed that:

> Sometimes we have a place to put books posters and banners. There is what used to be sensitization week, where we tried to get the users and sensitize them about new ways and new initiatives on something that we acquired. For example, in this kind of faculty (faculty of medicine) if there is any new initiative in any field of human medicine we try through meetings, through posters through handbills to sensitize people.[This indicates that medical libraries do their best to market and inform the users of anything new that comes in or has been acquired by the library].

This implies that the majority of the respondents believed that notice boards are the most used facility for the dissemination of information about resources in the library. Their position was also supported by one of the heads of medical libraries who explicitly indicated that they used notice boards to inform the users of the library about resources especially new arrivals as well as other relevant information that is of significance to the users. This therefore means that notice boards are an essential medium through which users are informed of the happenings in the library. This corroborates the findings of Enweani, (2018) in the study of marketing strategies in hospital libraries in Nigeria who noted that notice boards are being used to keep library users up-to-date with the university library services provided. It has the self-explanation benefit. It helps to market the library to library users

In contrast, regarding the report of facilities for marketing in this study Murugesan, (2017); Kumar,(2017); (Bhardwaj and Jain, (2016) and Khanchandani and Hasan, (2016) found that the libraries are offering facilities and services namely:
i.   Automation services;
ii.   Air conditioning facility;
iii. Web OPAC, and RFID (radio frequency identification) facilities;
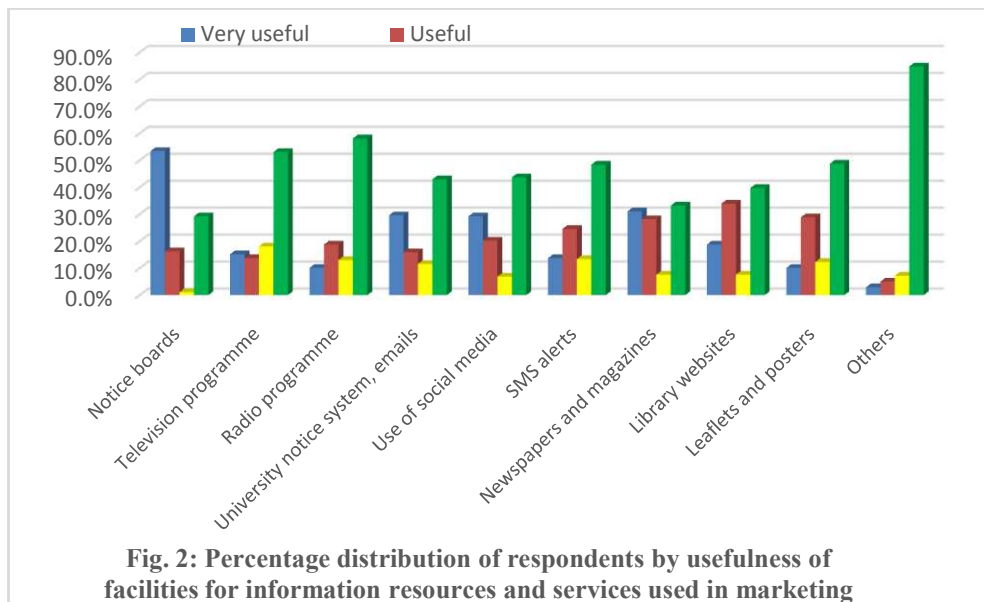iv.   Library portal and library website;

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v.   E-mail services;
vi.   Library online survey;
vii.   Webcasts and web announcements;
viii.   Online advertising;
ix.   Social network site such as Face book, Twitter, Flicker, YouTube, Blogs, Wikis, RSS, Web 2.0 and;
x.   Cell phone facilities are useful tools/facilities resources and services marketing of the academic libraries.

Opeyemi, Akinade andOjo, (2014) found that old and conventional service delivery methods, such as face-to-face and notice board approach, also top the list of service delivery methods. Khanchandani and Hasan, (2016) added that the library has installed RFID facility in the library for the users. The facility will assist the clients in the simple loaning of books, self-check-out through a kiosk or can self-check-in utilizing a book drop box on premises open 24/7 alongside the reading facilities. Others were relevant furniture; quality lightening and proper signage to encourage and expand readership in the library.

This means that libraries should have different facilities and ideas for effective marketing of information resources and services.

How useful are the following facilities for informing you about the resources and services for Marketing in your Library?

The research question on this theme sought to solicit the opinions of the students in order to assess the usefulness of the facilities for informing them about the resources and services to facilitate the marketing of resources and services in medical libraries. In this section the researcher wants to find out from the respondents as to how useful the available facilities in the medical libraries are in informing or conveying information about the information resources and services available to the users. Osinulu, Adekunmisi, Okewale andOyewusi, (2018) opined that for the libraries to attain competitive advantage in marketing they need to ensure high level ease of access to resources and services in the preferred format, ease of location, competent library staff, access to ICT applications, attractive library equipment and facilities, clean and noiseless environment, adequate and ergonomic chairs and tables, clean toilet facilities, illumination and good ventilation among others. Figure 2 below presents the results.

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Fig. 2: Percentage distribution of respondents by usefulness of facilities for information resources and services used in marketing

The notice board, library website, newspapers and social media are facilities that were highlighted by respondents. Platforms like SMS alerts, leaflets and posters among others were not seen as useful for marketing available information resources and services of such libraries.

Therefore, the opinions of the students suggested that the use of notice boards and library websites along with newspapers as well as the use of social media had significant impact on the marketing of the information resources and services. The findings showed that notice boards and library websites are the most useful facilities as indicated by the majority of the respondents. Radio programs are the least effective facility used for marketing medical libraries. This finding is consistent with the opinion of Aloysius, Awa and Aquaisua, (2019) that libraries worldwide used websites to market resources and services. It is one of the quickest means to inform users of the current resources and services in the library. In contrast, however, Abbas, Khalid, and Hashmi's, (2017) study revealed that University library websites were not properly developed as a marketing tool. The findings also showed that the websites lacked information and does not have a collaborative interface with users so that they can interact directly with users and receive feedback for more improvement in the library's technological development.

Therefore, it can be deduced that all the medical libraries have relatively good resources available conducive for reading and research and learning and

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particularly seating capacity. It was observed that the libraries could accommodate five hundred, (500-50), a little above two hundred (206-250), one hundred and ten (110-200), and forty (40-50) students respectively. Not all requirements for a conducive user environment in the libraries were present. This is consistent with the opinion of Odine(2011) and (Osinulu et al., 2018) who assert that the library settings ought to be better, for instance, there ought to be enough reading space, seats, tables, restrooms and proper ventilation, orderly and noise-free library environments, clean toilet facilities, lighting, training programs, the use of highly innovative library technology, applications and services and innovative marketing strategies.

Conclusion:

Facilities for marketing are about the use any medium or platform that would inform, facilitate or attract actual and potential users' access to available information resources and services in the medical libraries. This study however indicated that some of the essential available facilities were not known, at the same time not considered useful by the users. It is therefore, concluded that the medical libraries should wake up and ensure the maximum use of these facilities for effective and efficient use of their resources and services.

Recommendations
1. The library should make more efforts to use all the available facilities to market information resources and services to students, especially SMS alerts, radio programs, television, leaflets and posters, and social media like Face book, WhatsApp, blogs, Twitter, and so on. This is because they are easy to use and they capture the attention of most of the new generation users. Similarly, the appropriate adoption of these media will help the medical libraries a great deal. This would inspire them to profoundly market their resources and services to the users, especially in the corona virus pandemic era, when services are remotely provided. So, the provision of at least data bundles to these groups of users by the libraries suffices, for example. This can be achieved through proper use of these facilities to create awareness on the availability of the resources and services, which will assist immensely in facilitating the use of information resources and services.
2. It is recommended that the medical libraries should try as much as they can to make sure that they make proper use of these available facilities so that to market their various information resources and services to the users. Most especially, the Platforms like SMS alerts, leaflets and posters among others that were not seen as useful for marketing available information resources and services of such libraries. Thus, the medical libraries should deploy all the

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relevant and necessary ICT tools to ensure the proper use of these facilities in their bid to meet the users' needs in this trying moment when libraries were closed down as a result of COVID-19 pandemic.

3. More so, the medical libraries should solicit more funding from their parent institutions, donor agencies, alumni associations and publishers. Others are alternative revenue avenues such as social welfare shops, overdue fines and reprographic services. This will help the medical libraries to meet the minimum standard of funding for the educational institutions model from advanced countries. As such, the funds will be used to provide more facilities that would facilitate the optimum use of its resources and services.

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