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APPLICATIONS OF LIBRARY MARKETING STRATEGIES IN ATTRACTING USERS IN FEDERAL POLYTECHNICS IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study evaluated the application of library marketing strategies in attracting users in Federal Polytechnics in North Central Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study consisted of 2,606 ND and HND students in selected Federal Polytechnics, while a sample of 261 respondents was drawn using a 10% sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Evaluation of Library Marketing Strategies in Attracting Users Questionnaire (ELMSAUQ). The instrument was validated by experts in Library and Information Science as well as Measurement and Evaluation. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviation. Findings revealed that library marketing strategies are applied to a moderate extent in Federal Polytechnic libraries, with orientation programmes and social media platforms being the most commonly used strategies, while email alerts and SMS notifications were less utilized. The study also showed that users have a moderate level of awareness of library marketing strategies, with higher awareness of social media promotions and orientation programmes. The study concluded that although library marketing strategies contribute to user attraction, their application and effectiveness are not fully optimized. It was recommended that Federal Polytechnic libraries should strengthen the use of diverse marketing channels, improve user awareness through consistent promotion, and adopt more innovative and user-centered marketing approaches to enhance user attraction and engagement.

Keywords: Library, Marketing, Marketing strategies, Library users and Federal polytechnics

Introduction

The application of library marketing strategies in attracting users to Polytechnic libraries has become increasingly important in recent times, particularly in Federal Polytechnics in North Central Nigeria where user engagement is essential for the effective utilization of library resources and services. Polytechnic libraries operate within a dynamic and user-centered information environment where students, lecturers, and researchers depend on timely access to relevant information to support teaching, learning, and research activities. In Federal Polytechnics in North Central Nigeria, these users represent the primary beneficiaries of library services, and their level of attraction to the library determines the extent to which available resources are utilized. However, the evolving information landscape, characterized by the proliferation of digital technologies and alternative sources of information, has made it necessary for libraries to adopt proactive marketing strategies to attract users.

Library marketing has therefore emerged as a vital approach used by Polytechnic libraries to promote services, create awareness, and stimulate user interest. Unlike the traditional passive system where users are expected to discover library services on their own, modern library marketing focuses on identifying user needs and actively communicating the value of library resources. Studies have shown that libraries adopt various strategies such as social media engagement, exhibitions, orientation programmes, and public relations activities to attract users and enhance visibility of services (Eneogwe et al., 2025). Similarly, Abdulsalami and Salami (2013) note that marketing of library information services in polytechnics involves deliberate efforts such as user education, publicity, and communication strategies aimed at increasing patronage. In addition, Adegbitẹ-Badmus and

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Alabi (2022) emphasize that ICT-driven marketing approaches significantly enhance librarians' ability to reach wider audiences and improve user attraction.

User attraction is a central focus of library marketing strategies in Polytechnic libraries, involving the creation of awareness and stimulation of interest among potential users, especially students and academic staff. According to Chukwumawe et al. (2023), effective marketing strategies such as exhibitions, digital platforms, and awareness campaigns significantly influence undergraduate patronage in polytechnic libraries. Similarly, Oluwamayokun et al. (2024) observe that brochures, social media campaigns, and flyers are widely used to attract students who rely heavily on digital communication channels. These strategies help position libraries as relevant academic support systems and encourage initial engagement with library services. Library marketing strategies include both traditional and modern approaches such as notice boards, exhibitions, orientation programmes, library websites, and social media platforms. Emiri and Lulu-Pokubo (2019) note that social media has become a powerful tool for promoting library products and services, particularly among younger users. In the same vein, Adegbite (2020) explains that competitive intelligence and promotional strategies are essential for increasing user patronage in polytechnic libraries. The combination of these strategies reflects the evolving nature of library marketing practices aimed at attracting users in Federal Polytechnics in North Central Nigeria.

User patronage is closely linked to attraction, as it reflects the initial engagement of users with library services. Madu, Aboyade, and Aboyade (2025) state that library marketing significantly predicts patronage among academic users, indicating that effective promotion leads to increased library use. Likewise, Otuu and Unegbu (2022) emphasize that consistent marketing efforts enhance awareness and encourage users to engage with library resources. Therefore, the effectiveness of marketing strategies plays a critical role in determining whether users are attracted to library services. Public relations practices also contribute significantly to attracting users by enhancing communication between libraries and their users. Haruna, Madu, and Awurdi (2018) observe that public relations activities such as publicity, user engagement, and feedback mechanisms improve library visibility and usage. Ogbonyomi (2024) further notes that effective communication practices strengthen user-library relationships and improve service perception, thereby increasing attraction to library services in polytechnic environments.

The effectiveness of library marketing strategies is influenced by librarians' competencies and attitudes. Akpena (2023) notes that librarians' marketing skills and attitudes significantly affect the success of promotional activities, while Akporhonor (2020) emphasizes that librarians' perception of marketing determines the level of engagement in service promotion. Where librarians lack adequate skills or motivation, marketing effectiveness tends to decline, thereby reducing user attraction. Technological integration plays a crucial role in modern library marketing. Adegbitẹ-Badmus and Alabi (2022) observe that ICT skills enhance librarians' ability to promote services effectively, while Bello and Buba (2025) highlight those digital technologies are increasingly used in marketing library services in Nigerian academic libraries. These tools allow libraries to reach wider audiences and improve user engagement through online platforms and real-time communication. Library effectiveness in relation to marketing strategies is often measured by user attraction and engagement levels. Nwalo (2023) states that library effectiveness is reflected in how well services meet user needs and attract consistent usage. Carvalho, Maya, and Mandrekar (2020) also emphasize that effective library services contribute significantly to students' academic success and performance, reinforcing the importance of attracting users to library resources. Despite the adoption of various marketing strategies, Polytechnic libraries continue to face challenges that affect their effectiveness. Aderibigbe and Farouk (2017) highlight issues such as inadequate resources and poor awareness as major constraints to effective marketing. Horsfall (2020) further notes that limited funding, weak infrastructure, and lack of structured policies hinder the implementation of modern marketing strategies. These challenges reduce the effectiveness of library efforts in attracting users in Federal Polytechnics in North Central Nigeria. Understanding the application of library marketing strategies and their effectiveness in attracting users is therefore essential for improving library service delivery. Evaluating these strategies will provide insights into their strengths and limitations and help identify areas for improvement in Federal Polytechnic libraries in North Central Nigeria.

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Statement of the Problem

Library marketing strategies are widely recognized as important tools for promoting library services and attracting users in higher education institutions. In Federal Polytechnics in North Central Nigeria, libraries are expected to apply various approaches such as social media promotion, exhibitions, orientation programmes, public relations activities, and digital outreach to create awareness and encourage user engagement. However, despite these efforts, the level of user attraction remains relatively low, as many students and staff do not consistently utilize library services. This suggests a possible gap between the implementation of marketing strategies and their actual effectiveness in attracting users. In addition, the application of library marketing strategies is inconsistent across Federal Polytechnics in North Central Nigeria, with some institutions relying more on traditional methods while others attempt to integrate digital tools. The effectiveness of these strategies is often limited by challenges such as inadequate funding, weak communication systems, poor planning, and insufficient ICT infrastructure. Furthermore, factors such as librarians' skills, attitudes, and digital competencies also affect implementation. There is also limited empirical evidence specifically assessing how these marketing strategies influence user attraction, creating uncertainty about their overall effectiveness in the study area.

Objectives of the Study

The following Objectives guide the study:

1. Determine the extent to which library marketing strategies are applied in Federal Polytechnic libraries in North Central Nigeria.
2. Examine the level of awareness of library marketing strategies among users in Federal Polytechnics in North Central Nigeria.
3. Assess the extent to which library marketing strategies attract users to library services in Federal Polytechnics in North Central Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions was raised for the study:

1. To what extent are library marketing strategies applied in Federal Polytechnic libraries in North Central Nigeria?
2. What is the level of awareness of library marketing strategies among users in Federal Polytechnics in North Central Nigeria?
3. To what extent do library marketing strategies attract users to library services in Federal Polytechnics in North Central Nigeria?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which was considered appropriate for evaluating the application of library marketing strategies in attracting users in Federal Polytechnics in North Central Nigeria. The study was carried out in selected Federal Polytechnics within the North Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria, and the population consisted of 2,606 HND students, who were identified as the major users of library services and the primary respondents for assessing the effectiveness of library marketing strategies. A sample size of 10% of the population was used, giving a total of 261 respondents, selected through proportionate stratified and simple random sampling techniques to ensure fair representation across the institutions. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Evaluating of Library Marketing Strategies in Attracting Users Questionnaire (ELMSAUQ), which was designed in line with the objectives of the study. The instrument was validated by experts in Library and Information Science and Measurement and Evaluation, while its reliability was established using Cronbach Alpha to ensure internal consistency. The questionnaire captured respondents' views on the application of library marketing strategies and their effectiveness in attracting users to library services. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions.

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Results

Research Question 1: To what extent are library marketing strategies applied in Federal Polytechnic libraries in North Central Nigeria

Table 1: Application of Library Marketing Strategies

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD
1	Social media platforms	85	120	30	26	2.88	1.03
2	Orientation programmes	92	115	28	26	2.91	0.99
3	Exhibitions	70	100	55	36	2.58	1.01
4	Public relations activities	68	98	60	35	2.52	1.04
5	Email alerts	55	90	75	41	2.33	0.98
6	SMS notifications	60	88	72	41	2.40	1.00
	Cluster Mean					**2.60**	

The findings show that library marketing strategies are applied to a moderate extent in Federal Polytechnic libraries in North Central Nigeria, with a cluster mean of 2.60. Orientation programmes and social media platforms are the most commonly applied strategies, indicating a stronger focus on visible and interactive methods of promoting library services. In contrast, email alerts and SMS notifications are less frequently applied, showing limited use of personalized digital communication tools. Overall, the results suggest that while marketing strategies are in use, their application is not evenly distributed across all available channels.

Research Question 2: What is the level of awareness of Library Marketing Strategies among Users in Federal Polytechnics in North Central Nigeria?

Table 2: Awareness of Library Marketing Strategies

S/N	Items	VHA	HA	LA	VLA	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD
1	Social media promotions	82	110	25	15	2.89	1.02
2	Orientation programmes	76	108	32	16	2.80	0.98
3	Exhibitions	65	95	48	24	2.62	1.01
4	Public relations activities	60	88	55	29	2.55	1.03
5	Email alerts	50	80	70	32	2.34	0.97
6	SMS notifications	48	85	65	34	2.41	1.00
	Cluster Mean					**2.60**	

Key: VHA = Very Highly Aware, HA = Highly Aware, LA = Low Aware, VLA = Very Low Aware

The findings in Cluster B show that the overall awareness level of library marketing strategies among users is moderate, with a cluster mean of 2.60. Social media promotions (2.89) and orientation programmes (2.80) recorded the highest awareness levels, indicating that users are more familiar with these strategies. However, email alerts (2.34) and SMS notifications (2.41) recorded lower awareness levels, suggesting limited exposure to direct communication strategies.

Research Question 3: To what extent do library marketing strategies attract users to library services in Federal Polytechnics in North Central Nigeria?

Table 3: Library Marketing Strategies and User Attraction

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD
1	Social media campaigns attract users	120	95	30	16	2.90	1.01
2	Orientation programmes attract users	110	100	35	16	2.76	0.99
3	Exhibitions attract users	90	85	55	31	2.45	1.03
4	Public relations attract users	88	80	60	33	2.39	1.02
5	Digital alerts increase user attraction	100	92	40	29	2.65	1.00
6	Library marketing improves patronage	115	98	28	20	2.78	0.97
	Cluster Mean					**2.66**	

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

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The results in Cluster C reveal that library marketing strategies moderately attract users to library services, with a cluster mean of 2.66. Social media campaigns (2.90) and orientation programmes (2.76) were the most effective strategies in attracting users. However, exhibitions (2.45) and public relations activities (2.39) recorded lower mean scores, indicating weaker influence on user attraction. Overall, the findings suggest that digital-based marketing strategies are more effective in attracting users than traditional approaches.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings revealed that library marketing strategies are applied in Federal Polytechnic libraries in North Central Nigeria at varying levels, with greater emphasis on orientation programmes and social media platforms, while strategies such as email alerts and SMS notifications are less frequently used. This shows that although marketing activities are present, their application is not uniform across all available channels, with libraries relying more on visible and general communication methods. This pattern suggests that library marketing practices are still developing and have not been fully standardized across institutions, indicating partial implementation of available strategies. This study agreed with that of Onaolapo (2016), who mentioned factors like insufficient information resources, inadequate awareness of available information resources and inability of users to utilize the electronic information resources on their own for effective usage of the library information resources.

The study also found that users' awareness of library marketing strategies is moderate, with higher awareness recorded for social media promotions and orientation programmes, while awareness of email alerts and SMS notifications remains relatively low. This indicates that users are more familiar with visible and frequently used marketing approaches than with personalized or less direct communication tools. It also suggests that awareness creation is still concentrated on a few dominant platforms, limiting users' exposure to the full range of marketing strategies available in the libraries. The study also is in line with that of Aboyade, Ishola, Igbinlola and Ojokuku (2023) who stated that there are challenges librarians encountered in the use of social media for promoting library and information resources and service, supported with weighted mean which is greater than the standard mean.

The findings further revealed that library marketing strategies moderately attract users to library services in Federal Polytechnics in North Central Nigeria, with social media campaigns and orientation programmes identified as the most effective attraction tools. In contrast, exhibitions and public relations activities were less effective in drawing users to the library. This indicates that while marketing strategies do contribute to user attraction, their impact is not yet strong enough to ensure maximum engagement, as effectiveness is influenced by uneven application, limited awareness, and preference for certain communication channels over others. This study agreed with that of Ogbomo and Bello (2025), who stated that the level of involvement of librarians in marketing services and resources in university libraries is limited. Additionally, librarians' attitude as regards marketing in university libraries located in Delta and Edo States is favorable. The study also identifies several challenges that hinder the effective marketing of services and resources by librarians in these libraries. These difficulties include the lack of a marketing policy, subpar internet capabilities, bandwidth problems, a lack of marketing strategy training, insufficient planning and implementation of marketing strategies, a lack of funding, and inadequate management support.

Conclusion

The study concluded that library marketing strategies are applied to a moderate extent in Federal Polytechnic libraries in North Central Nigeria, with greater emphasis on orientation programmes and social media platforms, while personalized tools such as email alerts and SMS notifications are less utilized. It was also established that users have a moderate level of awareness of these marketing strategies, with higher awareness of visible and interactive methods. Furthermore, library marketing strategies moderately attract users to library services, although their effectiveness is limited by uneven application and reliance on a few dominant channels. Overall, the study shows that while marketing strategies contribute to user attraction, their implementation is not yet fully optimized to ensure maximum impact in Federal Polytechnic libraries.

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Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. Federal Polytechnic libraries should strengthen the application of diverse library marketing strategies by fully integrating both traditional and digital platforms, especially underutilized tools such as email alerts and SMS notifications, to ensure wider and more balanced outreach to users.
2. Library management should improve awareness creation of marketing strategies among users through sustained publicity, continuous orientation programmes, and consistent use of multiple communication channels to ensure that students are fully informed about available library services.
3. Libraries should enhance the effectiveness of marketing strategies in attracting users by adopting more innovative and user-centered approaches such as targeted social media campaigns, interactive digital engagement tools, and regular feedback mechanisms to improve user participation and service visibility.

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