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Marketing Strategies for ICT-Based Services in Academic Libraries: A Conceptual Description

Abstract

The advancement in technology has made it possible for ICT-based services to be offered in academic libraries to meet the information needs and expectations of today's library users. For any academic library to remain relevant in the current climate, it has to adopt appropriate marketing strategies to garner effective use of information products and desired patronage. It is common knowledge that when libraries take initiatives to market their activities, they are bound to create the awareness to their services whereby users will access and use effectively. This paper presents the conceptual description of marketing strategies for ICT-based services in academic libraries and presenting a general overview of ICT-based services and the different marketing strategies that could be adopted in marketing the services. Reasons for marketing ICT-based services and required skills for LIS professional are also examined. The paper reveals the possible challenges academic libraries could encounter in marketing ICT-based services. In conclusion, the paper establishes that marketing gives libraries the necessary tools to determine what ICT-based services users want, and guides them to develop, package, and promote those services in a way that will attract users to patronizing the libraries effectively. It is recommended among others that top management should constantly upgrade the existing ICT facilities in libraries and subscribe to more databases to entice library users.

Keywords: *Marketing, Marketing Strategies, Academic Libraries, ICT-based Services, Information Services, Information Technologies*

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1.1 Introduction

Marketing is a concept defined as a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging value with others. It involves building profitable, value-laden exchange relationships with clients (Dadzie & Hinson,

2014). Marketing of library products and services is recognized globally as an integral part of information management and a critical aspect in librarianship. It is becoming glaring that without marketing, especially in this era of innovative technologies, proliferation of information resources, and users' curiosity and expectations, libraries may not be able to

satisfy their users' needs in terms of making information available, accessible and delivered as required. In other words, the main focus of marketing lies on the user and his/her satisfaction with what and how it is marketed.

Academic libraries have a number of information resources as products which are in high demand for different purposes. They provide print and electronic information resources to students, faculty members, non-teaching staff, and others to support learning, teaching, research, and community development. It is therefore necessary that libraries ensure easy access and utilization of the information resources through their services. Library services have taken a new dimension in this millennium. It is no longer the traditional services only but also the ICT-based services. The technological advancement has changed the traditional ways of rendering library services and this has brought the concept of ICT-based services. These are services performed by librarians using computers, Internet, telecommunications, audiovisual technologies, machines, etc.

Ajemasu, Inuwa, Saad, & Jumba (2019) define ICT-based services as types of services offered in libraries using simple and sophisticated technologies to ensure extensive access to desired information and knowledge. Examples of such services include Internet, Web OPAC, CAS, SDI, reprographic services, electronic document delivery, institutional depository, etc. The importance of ICT-based services to all categories of library users cannot be overemphasized. They facilitate Internet surfing, blogging, discussion forums, data collection, knowledge update, and career development among others (Hussain, 2013).

Marketing of ICT-based services is driven by the fact that libraries need to make known the availability of the services; build users' interest in the services; reposition the libraries in relative to competitive offerings; increase users' patronage, among others. Academic libraries are expected to deploy ICT

infrastructure and facilities in marketing library products and services. This expectation seems to be a mirage in many academic libraries in Nigeria. Eda&Ukubeyinje (2019) reiterate noting that marketing is still not known to many libraries and library staff as a practice. In addition, the daily statistics on library usage reveals that users seem not to make use of the ICT-based services adequately. The situation could be attributed to the libraries' inability to market their ICT-based services. Against this background, this paper seeks to examine ICT-based services in academic libraries; identify the marketing strategies for ICT-based services; discuss the constraints to effective marketing of ICT-based services in Nigeria; and proffer useful recommendations.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

2.2 General Overview of ICT-Based Services in Academic Libraries

Academic libraries engage in various activities to guarantee effective and efficient access and use of print and non-print materials within and beyond the library. These activities could be done traditionally (manually) and electronically using ICT related equipment and tools. The concern of this paper is the later which came as a result of the digital convergence of computer technologies, telecommunication technologies, and other media communication technologies (Mishra & Mishra, 2014). ICT-based services could also be referred to as digital information services, electronic services, information access services, among others.

ICT-based services are the professional guidance and assistance performed in digital environment to satisfy the information needs and expectation of tech savvy users. It is obvious that today most library users have strong preference for ICT-based services. With smart phones, laptops, and other facilities, they gain access to a wide

range of information resources for educational, recreational, and research purposes. It is therefore critical that academic libraries provide in addition to the traditional services, ICT-based services to enable users have access to global information in their respective fields of knowledge to meet their information needs and expectations.

2.3 ICT-Based Services in Academic Libraries

Islam & Islam in Kaunda (2017) identify some of the ICT-based services to include the following:

i. Internet Service: Internet is the fundamental tool which other ICT-based services depend on for functionality. It necessitated the shift from collection management to information management which alters the nature, boundaries, and structure of information and its delivery process. Internet services facilitate scholarly communication and global on-line services through useful remote applications in online data repositories, online catalogues, simple and advanced search, online teaching, online communications, student and financial administration systems (Shehu, Urhufe, & Promise, 2015). Library users can have instant access to billions of information sources which include e-books, e-journals, e-reports, pictures, video films and sound recordings, among others. With Internet service, libraries can integrate nearly all other services ranging from collection development, cataloguing and classification, marketing services, inter-library loan, information search, among others.

ii. Bulletin Board Service (BBS): A Bulletin Board is an electronic public discussion forum or newsgroup that hosts posted messages, articles, and other resources on a common subject or theme of interest. The messages can be viewed by all users of the bulletin board or

only to a particular group of users as intended. All the users can post, read or retrieve messages simultaneously from the board while on Internet. The Bulletin Board Services (BBS) can be used as interface to either post information about library activities and services, invite suggestions on how to improve on the services, or display announcements and latest daily news about the library.

iii. Electronic Selective Dissemination of Information (eSDI): This simply refers to the procedure used by libraries to keep users informed of the newly acquired resources on predefined areas of interest using electronic system. The eSDI involves the generating of Research Interest Profiles (RIPs) of library users and searching various library resources with the aim of identifying the available resources that match the users' profile. The current information of interest, from whatever sources, is delivered electronically via social media tools and voice calls to the concerned users at their convenience. The eSDI is a personalized service and is directed towards the exact information need of the user. Feedback is considered as an important step in providing this type of service.

iv. Current Awareness Service (CAS): The essence of current awareness service is to keep library users informed and up-to-date in their field of knowledge. It makes the users aware of the current information resources available in the library in their areas of interest. CAS is provided by circulating copies of table of contents, bulletins containing bibliographic records, articles selected from current journals, books chapters and other information materials among all the users who need it. Although CAS can be provided manually but with Internet, libraries can now use predefined search strategy to access database online, copy current resources by discipline and store on a local system for easy

accessibility and utilization (Patel, 2018). Presently, a number of electronic publishing sites or portals and electronic tools like Weblog, Webziness, e-newsletters, and Listserv provide access to latest relevant information in different subjects.

v. Web-based Online Public Access Catalogue (Web-OPAC): This is also referred as “Web Cats” or “Information Gateway” which provides access to all the electronic resources held by a library or group of participating libraries. This universal online catalogue presents various contents from different libraries all over the world and allows access to them through World Wide Web. The contents of Web-OPAC can be searched, accessed, and used easily by library users provided their local libraries are linked to Internet. Web-OPAC also provides links that help users to identify related records within the catalogues and those that are not within the catalogues (external resources) such as links to publishers, scientific societies, full-text documents, and other sources. According to Chatterjee & Sarkhel (2016), most library software systems now include web-based interfaces to OPACs which makes for direct accessibility to its contents. Web-OPAC also allow users can make reservations for materials of interest, renewal of materials on loan, use Boolean operators for information search, and seek online help using suggestions or command box options.

vii. Electronic Document Delivery Service: This is a value added service that allows libraries to deliver copies of journal articles, book chapters, conference proceedings, and other documents to users at different locations electronically. With ICTs, it is possible for libraries to deliver to users on request, document(s) which are available or not available in their respective libraries. Hosburgh & Okamoto (2010) assert that electronic document delivery has been an

important component of inter-library loan operations. There are two methods libraries can use for electronic document delivery service. The first method is to simply send the document(s) as a Portable Document Format (PDF) attachment to the user's e-mail account. The second option is to post the document(s) to a Web server and then send the user an e-mail that includes the URL for the Web site where the documents can be accessed, instructions for accessing and using the file, and usernames and PINs needed to open the documents. However, the two methods can be used effectively depending on the library's range of services (on campus/ off-campus), the size of documents to deliver, and the library policy.

viii. Digital Library Service: Digital library service allows libraries to provide a wide range of digital information sources ranging from document surrogates (catalogues, bibliographies, indexes, abstracts, etc.), full-text documents, videos, images, etc. Print resources are converted into electronic resources by digitization and made accessible remotely. Course materials, past question papers, solved and unsolved problem sets, class presentation materials, etc could also be made accessible to students on demand after obtaining due permission from the course lecturers. Apart from providing access to distributed information resources, the service enables the library to gain global visibility for its products and services as well as reduces physical space.

ix. User Education Service: User education service offers formal and informal instructions in form education programmes meant to guide the existing and potential library users in the recognition and effective use of library resources and services. The programmes, usually handled by professional librarians, are well packaged to equip users with adequate knowledge and skills for

effective use of the library. Such programmes include library orientation, library tours, online information literacy instructions, library skills, research consultation, database instruction, etc. Liu et al (2019) posit that library user education is expected to have various positive effects on students' learning outcomes, research practices, and self-motivation for independent learning.

x. Institutional Repository Service (IRS):

Institutional repository service involves the management and circulation of digital materials published by members of staff and the host institution. Such materials include research projects, theses, dissertations, conference papers, seminar papers, journal articles, and other academic materials by lecturers and other staff members. Bulletins, newsletters, and other publications of the host institution are also made accessible to users. Lecturers, non-teaching staff, information unit of the institution, and librarians have to bring their research outputs/scholarly publications to the repository for better visibility, readability, and utilization. The IRS is also essential for the preservation, organization, storage, and distribution of materials published locally. With ICTs, libraries find it easier to collect or capture, store, index, and preserve these research outputs in digital format and make them accessible via Internet.

xi. Audiovisual Service: Audiovisual media are electronic resources that possess both sound and visual recordings such as slide-tape presentations, films, projection equipment, interactive whiteboard, corporate conferencing, computer software, slides, live theatre productions, etc (Oghenetega & Amugen, 2014). They contain important information of educational and recreational/entertainment value that could be used as excellent tools for teaching and learning. Audiovisual service involves the selection,

organization, and maintenance of the audiovisual media according to established guidelines. It also includes lending which allows registered users to make use of the audiovisual media within the library or borrow them for home use.

xii. Ask a Librarian Service: This is a free virtual reference service that offers online assistance to students, lecturers, and researchers. It is a collaborative service that allows a professional librarian to answer questions posed by library users via live chat software, text messaging, and e-mails accessed through embedded links and widgets on their library's official website (Wikipedia, 2020).

xiii. Reprographic Service: Reprographic service involves the use of equipment to photocopy, duplicate, or reproduce library materials that are not open accessed or cannot be borrowed out of the library. Popoola (2008) defines reprographic service as the reproduction of graphics through mechanical or electrical means such as photography or xerography. The concept of reprographic service is predicted on the preservation and dissemination of information. The service helps in minimizing the rate of mutilation and book theft as well as facilitating quick and easy access to information.

2.4 Marketing Strategies for ICT-Based Services

Marketing strategies are well-structured plan of actions that highlights the library's goals and the specific process of achieving them (Kaunda, 2017). They are defined techniques undertaken by libraries to draw attention to their products and services in order to primarily increase users' patronage. Some of the marketing strategies that could be adopted in marketing ICT-based services in libraries include the choice and use of the

following:

Posters: The use of posters is one of the most cost effective forms of marketing products and services. Posters are visual representations of what is to be marketed. Academic library can design a poster with all its ICT-based services and place it at a strategic position within or outside the library to create awareness and capture the attention of the library users. Such poster should be well designed with a clear concise presentation of the ICT-based services.

Newsletters and Leaflets: These are useful means of communicating to library users. Newsletters and leaflets can be used to list interesting new websites, list of subscribed databases, new arrivals, online services, and more general information about the library and its organizational structure. The information needs to be as brief as possible and should be produced on regular basis. Newsletters and leaflets can be handed out to users at the point of registration and also displayed on notice boards or display boards which should be placed at strategic position. They should be published in print and online formats for wider accessibility and use.

Library Bulletin and Guide: The library bulletin and guide also enable regular communication between the library and its users. Unlike newsletters and leaflets, bulletin and guide contains more information. They contain events and day-to-day activities of the library. They are also updated regularly to accommodate series of development in the library. They are usually published in successive parts and made accessible to users in both print and online formats. The library bulletin helps users to be aware of what the library has as products and services as such it could be referred to as Current Awareness Bulletin.

Public Lecture: A public lecture is an oral presentation intended to teach people about a particular subject. The library can organize a public lecture within the institution with the aim of creating awareness for desired usage of its offerings. In this case, experience librarians within the host library and beyond could be assigned to speak on topics of relevance to the theme of the public lecture. The host library is expected to carry out wide publicity using online tools, flyers, verbal invitation, etc to attract the community members' attention and attendance. It is necessary the library adopts committee approach to the planning and execution of such programme.

Institutional Radio Station: Radio is one of the most important means of communication which uses electromagnetic wave and broadcast through space. Higher institutions in Nigeria offering Mass Communication and other broadcast related courses have a radio station on campus especially as it is a requirement for accreditation of the academic programmes (National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), 2020). Librarians can be hosted for talk-show whereby several issues concerning the library will be put to bare. During the talk-show, phone lines could be opened for listeners to ask questions related to the subject of discussion. This could be done on regularly bases to keep the community members abreast of the library services.

Word-of-Mouth: This strategy involves the passing of information from person to person by oral communication. Word-of-mouth can act as such a powerful and highly credible strategy capable of influencing people's decisions to patronize or avoid the library services (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). Library staff could employ this strategy to discuss with colleagues, teaching and non-teaching staff, and friends in different Faculties and units about the library and its services with the aim of creating awareness and stimulating

positive response from them. Library users can also use this method to persuade fellow users to join them in using the library products and services especially if they had good experience during service encounters.

One-on-One Communication: This strategy could liken to word-of-mouth because both involve giving information about anything to another person. But, one-on-one communication is not restricted to using words. Librarians can communicate the scope of services offered in the library by writing to another individual who has personal concerns. With the technological/communication tools available, it becomes much easier for librarians to market ICT-based services to different user groups in different times at different locations. One-on-one or person-to-person communication is a valuable tactic that should be practiced by all librarians to encourage the patronage of library services.

Orientation Exercise: Orientation exercise is organized in all higher institutions for newly admitted students in all departments. The programme is usually handled by the Student Affairs Division upon completion of students registration exercise. The exercise is meant to introduce fresh students to activities in the institution as well as taking a tour to the university library using a power point presentation. To get it right, members of library orientation committee who should be professional librarians will have to plan for the exercise, design the activities for the day, and decide on the presenters beforehand. During the presentation, emphasis is laid on registration process, library etiquette, different library divisions/units, library resources, lending system, traditional/ICT based services, among others. Through orientation exercise, freshmen get a whole lot of information about the library and its usage making them familiar with the library system.

Social Communication Tools: These are simply tools with both distribution and collective mechanisms that are social and help in communication. The tools, according to Jain (2013) include WhatsApp, E-mail, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, Twitter, Blog, LinkedIn, and others. They have the capacity to enhance relationships, connection, and sharing of knowledge with targeted user groups. Libraries can use them for effective marketing of ICT-based services. They are cost-effective and user-friendly. It is hardly few users without an account with at least a social communication platform. This makes the use of social media tools a rewarding and exciting means of marketing.

Incentives: The use of incentives in libraries entails the libraries' involvement in occasional promotional activities to stimulate or encourage users to use the library effectively. The use of incentive, though not practiced in most libraries, is a good marketing strategy. Libraries need to declare some weeks within academic session, fine free weeks. During this period, all long overdue books could be returned within the time frame without payment of fine, and the library also witness high patronage of users. Other incentives may include free Internet access and free photocopying for a short duration determined by the library management. According to Uzoagba & Okeke (2019), incentives can be used as bait to attract faculty members to patronizing ICT-based services. The idea of using incentives in libraries is to make users aware, be attracted, and be induced to patronize ICT-based services.

Aggressive Advocacy: Advocacy is an action oriented art of persuasion to bring about change in policies, resources allocations, services delivery, and behaviour that could affect the library (Myenzi in Tofi, 2019). Advocacy is one strategy that librarians need

to adopt to keep libraries and their services in the minds of the people who make decisions that affect the libraries. It helps to create, sustain, and increase the awareness of the importance of libraries and their services. This could be done through oral/written communication or direct interventions at different forums such as Committee of Deans meeting, Management meeting, etc. Apart from creating awareness and influencing decisions made on the libraries, advocacy exposes the librarians' ability to lobby and create value for the libraries. It is believed that information shared by librarians at such forums will be communicated to other community members during their

departmental meetings and that could go a long way to encourage effective use of ICT-based services.

2.5 Marketing Skills of Library and Information Science (LIS) Professionals

Marketing of ICT-based services could be more demanding especially with the emerging technologies, the necessity to market library services, and the need to satisfy diverse information needs of faculty members in academic institutions. This situation places a demand on the LIS professionals to exercise a unique set of skills at various levels as presented in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Basic Marketing Skills for LIS Professionals culled from Doyle (2019)

Communication Skill: Communication skill gives librarians the ability to communicate clearly and intelligently to community members why they should use the library or otherwise patronize ICT-based services. This takes the form of well-presented written or

oral communication. Every communication should be kept simple and precise rather than philosophical. Communication skill enable librarians to create a good rapport with users, perceive users' requirements, and receive feedback from them, among others. To this

end, the library should ensure that its marketing representatives are perfectly knowledgeable in the library activities as well as being patient and courteous. Also, the purpose of every communication and the plan for achieving it be decided in advance.

Public Speaking Skill: Public speaking skill is a soft skill or interpersonal skill that requires enthusiasm and the ability to engage with an audience. This skill is highly needed when library professionals engage in presentations such as public lecture, advocacy, or presentations at any forum. Such situations demand that the presenter be comfortable in speaking, be loud enough and use correct grammar without verbal crutches like “um”, and be able to handle on-the-spot questioning. Library professionals should be able to speak confidently and convincingly in order to pitch their ideas to the audience. According to Doyle (2019), librarians can hone their public speaking skills by volunteering to take the lead on pitches, joining public speaking groups, contributing during meetings and discussions as well as presenting papers at conferences and workshops.

Analytical Thinking Skill: Analytical thinking skill otherwise known as problem-solving skill is invaluable asset that enables library professionals to quickly identify problems relating to marketing of library and its services. It entails a methodical step-by-step approach to thinking that allows complex problems to be broken down into manageable components. Such problems are seen as drawbacks or hindrances against effective marketing of library services. Librarians should apply analytical thinking skill to identify and analyze the marketing problems, draw logical conclusions based on data and other information generated, and sort new information, action, or ideas to provide a lasting solution and improvement. It is more likely that when librarians acquire analytical

thinking skill, the marketing of ICT-based services will be done more efficiently.

Creativity Skill: Creativity skill, also known as creative thinking skill entails the ability to look at things differently and find new ways of solving problems. Petrone (2019) defines creativity skill as the ability to attend to situations with relevance and novelty. The author puts forward that to avoid becoming stale, librarians need creativity to be able to think of new and exciting ideas and apply them to the marketing of library services. Librarians could think of new ways of encouraging library patronage. For example, in a way of incentives, libraries could give a monthly award or appreciation to the most regular user of the month by placing his/her picture at a strategic position for the period concern.

Negotiation Skill: Negotiation is a type of discussion that results in a compromise where involving parties make a concession for mutual benefit. Doyle (2019) defines negotiation skill as ability to present a win-win proposal that achieves library goals without ignoring the needs of community members. Velmurugan&Manjula (2015) state that librarians need this skill to be able to deal with different stakeholders (top management, faculty members, students, etc) who may hold a wrong impression that there is no need to invest so much in libraries or patronize them since all the information they need can be accessed online and for free. This could be one of the reasons most academic libraries especially in Nigeria are not adequately funded. However, librarians have to breast up and apply negotiation skills to drive home salient points which reveal the myriad benefits of using the library and its services. Negotiation demands that librarians listen, empathize, persuade, and identify compelling service features to achieve success.

Stress Management Skill: Stress management skill is simply the ability to handle stress without panicking. The development and application of marketing initiatives for ICT-based services can be very stressful owing to the fact that series of activities are involved. Putting the activities together within deadlines to achieve the purpose of adopting the marketing strategy could be demanding. Thus, librarians should be able to adopt techniques for stress reduction such as calming self-talk, physical exercise, and meditation, among others. Stress could also be reduced if librarians compare and contrast the different marketing strategies against the financial, human, and physical resources available to them to be able to choose affordable strategies that could be implemented with no or less stress.

Technology Skill: Technology skill, also known as technical skill is the ability to work with physical objects or tools. For librarians to effectively market ICT-based services, they need to keep up with the current technological trends. It has become increasingly important that librarians know how to use computer software like MS word, MS excel, CorelDraw, MS PowerPoint, Photoshop, etc. The skill avails librarians the opportunity to design posters, bulletin and guide, use social media tools to communicate with faculty members, surf Internet for quality online resources, and troubleshoot new technologies. It is almost impossible to market ICT-based services in this era without the technology skill. Librarians have to continue learning to keep up to date with new developments as regards marketing strategies.

3.1 Constraints to Marketing of ICT-Based Services in Academic Libraries

The process of marketing ICT-based services in academic libraries is not without limitations. The following factors could be regarded as constraints.

Inadequate Funding: Most academic libraries are experiencing inadequate funding especially in developing countries. Provision of state-of-the-arts infrastructure, subscription to databases, provision of constant network connectivity, and maintenance of existing facilities in support of marketing of library services is somewhat difficult in most cases where shrinking budget for libraries is experienced. Kaunda (2017) confirms that many academic libraries lack sufficient funds as such they struggle to maintain a minimum standard of services as such there is no room for new ventures and marketing of the existing library offerings is difficult.

Poor Library Image: Some library users have poor image about the library and its services and even the librarians. They assume that libraries cannot satisfy their sophisticated information needs. They hold negative attitudes towards librarians assuming that they are only trained and skilled but lack professionalism to guide them in their information search and access (Ajileye-Loagun, 2004; Kaunda, 2017). Librarians need to create a positive library image to users by demonstrating that they are professionally and intellectually competent to assist library users in meeting their information needs and expectations.

Intangibility of Services: Libraries are mostly regarded as non-profit organizations and in most cases the services provided are free-based services which do not attract any profit. As noted by Kaunda (2017), the intangibility of services creates marketing challenges whereby the librarians who provide such services see themselves as producers or creators and not as marketers of the services. Although, librarians are proud of their professional abilities but most of them do not think of themselves as business people as

such there is still much resistance among them to the use of marketing approach to library management (Kendama, 2011; Uzoagba&Okeke, 2019).

Lack of Professional Confidence: Some librarians lack professional confidence or confidence within work setting. They claim not to be marketers and this has challenged their readiness to handle the stress, competitiveness, vocabulary, workload, instructional or orientation methods, and related complexities associated with the marketing of ICT-based services in academic libraries. According to Mohan (2019), building professional confidence involves learning from the best source, believing in oneself, banishing negativity, stepping out of comfort zone, visualizing success, among others.

Poor Access to Technologies: Advancement in technology has brought unprecedented changes in library activities including the marketing of library services. The potential power of technology enables libraries to employ creativity and innovation towards service marketing. This development which supposed to be welcomed by librarians, top management, library users, etc seems to receive very low attention especially in Nigeria. Supporting technologies like Internet, software programmes, tools, etc for marketing of ICT-based services are rarely available and accessible by librarians. Thus, making it difficult to plan and implement marketing strategies for ICT-based services.

Bureaucracy: Bureaucracy is a hierarchical administrative structure with long lines of communication within an organization. Bureaucracy has some defects which include lengthy and roundabout way of doing things, red-tapism (dogged and blind attachment to rules), excessive adherence to formalism, inflexibility, etc. These overriding defects of

bureaucracy are detrimental to the planning and implementation of marketing strategies for ICT-based services. The fact that libraries need to wait for approval from relevant authorities before implementing any proposed marketing strategy is challenging. Sometimes, the long process involved could be a wasted effort as such request may be turn down even after lobbying.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Marketing of ICT-based services is becoming more necessary in academic libraries today not only to increase patronage but also to maintain relevance in contemporary climes. With the availability of varieties of innovative technological tools and users' preferences, it behooves that libraries develop and apply effective strategies for marketing ICT-based services. This paper therefore presented an overview of ICT-based services, conceptual considerations of marketing strategies, and reasons for marketing ICT-based services. The paper further discussed the marketing skills required of library and information science professionals and possible constraints to marketing of ICT-based services. The paper achieved its primary objective of emphasizing the marketing of ICT-based services in academic libraries which can be further consolidated through the following recommendations:

1. Libraries should be adequately funded to enable the acquisition of physical and infrastructural resources required for effective marketing of ICT-based services.
2. Top management of academic institutions should constantly upgrade the existing ICT facilities in libraries and subscribe to more databases so as to entice library users.
3. Librarians should be trained and re-trained regularly to acquire the right skills needed for marketing of ICT-based services.

4. Library orientation should not be a once-a-year activity and for freshmen alone. It should be conducted on regular basis, if possible on faculty basis, for all categories and levels of users. This will ensure effective participation and understanding of practical aspects of the orientation and by extension effective marketing.

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