

Influence of Marketing Strategy on Public Library Patronage in Akwa Ibom State

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This article investigated the influence of marketing strategy on public library patronage in Akwa Ibom state. A research survey design was adopted for the study. 380 users were sampled out of a population of 7529 users under study using the Taro Yemane sampling technique. A structured and validated questionnaire was used for data collection. Data was analyzed using the SPSS software, frequency distribution and percentages. Purpose of visit and marketing strategy were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Regression was used in analyzing the hypothesis. It was proven that Marketing strategies will positively and significantly influence public library patronage in Akwa Ibom State($R = .953$, $R^2 = .903$, $F = 3700.193$). It was recommended that librarians should take advantage of marketing strategies to boost patronage of their libraries. Furthermore, Akwa Ibom state library board should employ marketing strategies to boost patronage of public libraries in Akwa Ibom state. Librarians should make use of television, radio and social media to promote library services.

Keywords: Marketing, marketing strategy, public library, patronage

INTRODUCTION

In this information age, public library services and products are very vital for creating and advancing knowledge, providing different classes of information, expanding and promoting research in various fields. The public library can be described as an institution that evolves ideas and displays scholarly works of repute through a variety of collections of resources, products in several forms and formats as well as services. It is an establishment which caters for the informational needs of everybody in the society. The implication of the word public in public library means the library is expected to serve everybody in the community in which it is situated and it is generally called "The People's University". Its main objective of serving the general public is to boost the educational uplift and awareness of rural and urban persons. Every citizen irrespective of gender or age needs information both for personal development and to be able to know their rights, privileges and duties.

ÁAshikuzzaman (2018) defined public library as a library which is accessible to the public and generally funded from public source and may be operated by civil servants; Akanwa (2013) see the public library as a library that provides information resources, services and recreational outlets for the generality of the citizenry, namely, the

young, the old, the literate and the non-literate and to Abraham (2010), public library is a welfare centre which provides useful services to the community by fostering education, promoting culture. Providing scope for healthy recreation and disseminates information to all section of the society. The public library provides information resources in the form of books and non-book materials to enrich the lives of patrons and give them unlimited opportunity for learning as well as keep them up-to-date on new social, economic and scientific developments. And these information resources including books, journals, magazines, newspapers, films, filmstrips, video tapes, slides, computers, recording of all types, study kits etc. are in the library to aid the users in the route of education as well as help them to grow into knowledgeable adults. Again, the use of library resources and services would make the users to develop good reading skills as well as know about their culture, traditions and norms. Besides, the public library to a large extent aids national development because its operation and services can form useful indices in the measurement of the level of development of any people or group.

Public libraries therefore, are often considered an essential institution for producing educated and literate population. As it is well known all over the world, informed citizens are productive, more governable and

responsive to government programs. It is noted that a society that generates the most information is the strongest society. This makes the government to invest massively in public libraries in order to meet the different information needs of individuals in a timely fashion. Based on the importance of public library stated above among others, the general public is expected to make effective and efficient use of it by constantly visiting the library to satisfy their informational needs as users' regular visits to the public library to explore and access useful information translate to patronage of the public library. Patronage of public library may not be commensurate with investment in public library. Sometimes the patronage may be far behind expectation thus showing an indication of a low level of patronage. Hence, the researcher has observed low patronage of the public libraries in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria by non-visit of users to the public libraries. More so, previous studies Saibakumo, Orewa and Nwose (2019) and Ofodili and Ifijeh (2013) established low library usage in their various studies. These low patronages of public libraries have manifested in users not visiting and making use of library and its resources.

Low patronage could be caused by many factors such as information on the lack of presence of products and services that caters for users' needs; choice; utilization and satisfaction with the product; non availability of various services like frequent story times in which books are read to children and infants; documentaries; home-work guidance; educative tutoring on the use of laptop computers and other electronic devices; time; lack of manpower; low levels of satisfaction; epileptic power supply; poor attitude of staff; non-availability of internet connectivity; unawareness of services; lack of information literacy skills; outdated or irrelevant information resources; less audio-visual materials; no Braille materials; no social media; non extension of library open hours, budget cuts; changing internal and external environment (Saibakumo, Orewa and Nwose, 2019; Salman, Mugwisi and Mostert, 2017; Yi, 2016); Ikenwe and Adegbilero-Iwari, 2014; Ofodili and Ifijeh, 2013; Bamise and Oyedapo, 2012; Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu, 2012). In this study, library patronage will be measured with frequency of visit to the library and purpose of visit.

Low patronage challenge could be addressed through well-designed strategies. These bell-out strategies and plans have been adopted by private sector businesses with proven track records of successes. Some authors have proffered these private sector success driven tools for public libraries grappling with budget cuts and changing internal and external environments. Paramount among the bell-outs is the concept of marketing strategies which involves creating series of activities such as research, product development, pricing, promotion and place to manage public library resources and services (Osinulu, Okewale & Oyewusi, 2018; Haruna,

Makinta & Tongs, 2017; Salman, Mugwisi & Mostert, 2017; Gupta, 2016; Bhardwaj & Jain, 2016; Yi, 2016; Chaubey & Lal, 2016; Adegoke, 2015; Brito, 2014).

The application of marketing plans and activities could regenerate the public library and its offerings to users. Other tools to be considered for injecting life into the public libraries include the use of social media platforms as websites, blogs, email and social media – Choi and Joo (2018) and Yi (2016). Marketing for the library means understanding and meeting clientele needs, developing services and continuous developing of marketing plans and programmes to meet users' satisfaction. The indices used in measuring marketing strategies in this study are product, place and promotion.

Since this study deals with public library patronage in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, a brief overview of the nature of its patronage will now be highlighted here. In recent times, records show that, patronage of public libraries in Akwa Ibom State is deemed low compared to the population it is expected to serve in the Local Government Areas (LGAs) selected for this study. For example, a cursory look at the users' register at Eket public library showed that between the months of April and August 2019, the users were just 2,608 when the actual population of Eket LGA is 172,856 people (National Population Commission–2006 census). This clearly shows that the patronage of the public library in Eket is very low comparatively, as the number of users represents only 1.50% of the population of Eket people. The same low patronage is observed with Abak public library. Between the same period of investigation, Abak public library registered only 1,307 users compared to the Population of Abak LGA of 139,069 (National Population Commission, 2006 Census), showing a patronage scale of 0.93% to the total population. This number of users is un-impressive. The case of Etinan public library is worse, where its users' register, between April and August 2019 is only 170, meanwhile, the population for Etinan LGA stands at 168,924 people (National Population Commission - 2006 census). Thus, public library patronage in Etinan LGA is only 0.10% of the population, clearly showing a very poor patronage. Finally, Uyo public library which is situated in the capital city did not fare better. The number of users between the same period stands at 3,174, which is far below Uyo's population of 305,961 (National Population Commission, 2006 census). Also, the number of users represents only 1.03% of its total population, constituting very poor patronage for a capital city. From these discoveries, it could be deduced that the patronage of public libraries in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria is not commensurate with government investments and the population.

By implication, the huge benefits of the public library are not exploited by the citizens as government investment which automatically is for the benefit of the citizens social emancipation is being abandoned.

Therefore, the rest of the population that does not use public library must be encouraged through well-designed marketing strategies to also patronize it. In this context, Marketing Strategy could enhance support of the Public library and affiliation by members of the society. It is could increase usage of library services by users. Such users can be registered members of the library or occasional users or people who come because of search for specific knowledge or information. A well- structured written plan should be a part of the library strategies to promote resources and services. The purpose of a library marketing plan is to increase users and convince people to accept its products. Reasons for applying marketing strategies to library operation is to increase users' satisfaction, patronage and increase funding by government. An enhanced perception of the value of the library will translate into increased level of support or patronage for the library.

A cursory look at the public libraries shows that there is no modern marketing activities of their resources and services in order to attract the citizens to use the libraries while other social services, like public health in particular, are achieving veritable gains in reach and penetration of the populace through the use of modern marketing tools. It is therefore understandable that the success or underperformance story of public library service is hard to come by compared to the success story of Cholera, Tuberculosis, Polio and several diseases which flaunt figures and trends of their curb. The impact of use of modern tools to popularize public health service is common in local and multilateral published reports. Airwaves, print media, billboards, campaigns and events branding by public health services are all over the country where as there is none for public libraries. Elimination of yellow fever, polio and smallpox are some of the success stories of public health services' effective marketing.

To the knowledge of this author, no modern marketing pitch to inform and popularize the public library services to the populace. Arguably public library service, by design, is vital to the survival of government, the people and modern society at large and therefore should attract high publicity, promotion, public relation, advocacy and advertisement just like its counterpart public health service. Marketing strategies is the only discipline that is solely devoted to satisfying Ranganathan's law of the library (Kamara, 2017), which libraries should leverage on to promote the services they provide to the public.

Though success of public library is not accounted for in terms of profit and customer loyalty as known to the commercial world where marketing tools are highly patronized, effectiveness of modern marketing tools have been proven in the social service industry where public library belongs. Success and effectiveness of government funding of public library service is arguably critical to all other social services of government because the right information, among the right population and

location is necessary to bring people to patronize the public library services. It is the conviction of the author that the application of appropriate marketing strategy or strategies will attract users to visit and make use of library resources and services thereby boosting the patronage of public libraries hence the topic of this work.

Statement of the Problem

Public libraries are established to provide vital services and products to every citizen, irrespective of gender, age, job status, educational level or race. The citizenry needs information for personal development and to be knowledgeable of their rights and privileges. Hence, for government, the public library is expected to inform citizens and mold them to be productive members of the society, governable and responsive to government programmes. For these reasons, the public libraries are established and funded by the government to ensure users have free access to information. The library complements the work of the government by performing the functions of acquisition, processing, storing and providing access to useful and educative information to its citizens. From the users' register and personal experience, the researcher observed very low patronage of the public libraries in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. In collaboration with this observation are Saibakumo, Orewa and Nwose (2019) and Ofodili and Ifijeh (2013) who have established low patronage of library services in their works. This low patronage of public libraries in Akwa Ibom State is evidenced in non-visit to the library by users of the library. Some of the factors that authors identified in this assertion include lack of relevant and current information resource materials, obsolete information materials, poor attitude of staff, un-conducive environment, distance from the people and lack of awareness on products and services the public library provides.

Various studies reviewed in the course of this work clearly show that patronage of public library is highly challenged and needs an immediate intervention. From literature review, public libraries are found wanting particularly in availability of facilities of the new information age such as internet/ICT, social media tools, constant supply of electricity and application of modern marketing tools. This could be the reasons the number of users of public libraries is low. To this end, many studies have proposed that public libraries re-strategize by using modern marketing tools and technologies to create awareness and improve library resources and services in order to regain the users' patronage and loyalty.

It is important to note that, without reasonable patronage of public libraries by users, the efforts of the government in establishing and funding the public libraries will amount to futility. Hence, the question that

comes to the mind of the researcher is, could it be that the low patronage of public libraries in Akwa Ibom State is as a result of lack of adequate or non-marketing strategies that display the essence of the public library to the peoples' various educative and information needs? Therefore, this study investigated the influence of marketing strategy and patronage of public libraries in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The overall objective of the study is to examine the influence of marketing strategy on public library patronage in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria; while the specific objectives are to:

1. Find out the purpose users patronize public libraries in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.
2. Establish the frequency users visit the public libraries.
3. Establish the marketing strategies used in public libraries.
4. Examine the relationship between marketing strategy and patronage of public library in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. For what purpose do users patronize public libraries in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria?
2. What is the frequency of visit to public libraries in Akwa Ibom State by users?
3. What marketing strategies do public libraries used in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

This study was guided with one hypothesis measured at 0.05 significant level.

H01: Marketing strategies will not significantly influence public library patronage in Akwalbom State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study comprised all users of the public libraries covered in this study within in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The total population of the public libraries' users in Akwa Ibom State for a period of 5 months between April and August 2019 which was 7,259 (Etinan, Abak, Eket and Uyo library, 2019). The researcher applied Taro Yamane sampling size method in determining the sample size for this study. Based on the adopted sampling method, the sample size was derived from a total sample size of 7259 users of the public libraries in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. To determine the sample size for the study, the Taro Yamane statistical formula given as represented below was substituted with numbers and calculated thus:

$$n = N/1+N (e)^2$$

Where:

n = the required sample size from the population under study

N = the whole population that is under study.

e= the precision or sampling error which is usually 0.10, 0.05 and 0.01

Substituting in the formula, $n = N/1+N (e)^2$

Where N=7259, e=0.05

$$n = 7259/1 + 7259 (0.05)^2$$

$$n = 379.109$$

$$n = 380$$

The researcher used the sample size of 380 library users for the generation of reliable and valid inference for the study. The instrument adopted for the study was a self-structured questionnaire. Data of this study was collected by the researcher with the help of two research assistants that were trained on the importance of the study and how to address the questions that may arise from the respondents. Data collected was analyzed by computer using the software of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the frequency of visit to public library in Akwa-Ibom State, Nigeria?

Table 1

Do you visit the library?	Frequency	Percent
YES	320	84.2
NO	60	15.8
Total	380	100.0
If yes, how often do you visit the library?	Frequency	Percent
Rarely	87	22.9
Occasionally	101	26.6
Often	89	23.4
Very often	103	27.1
Total	380	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021

From the data on table 1, it is observed that 84.2% of the respondents visit the public library in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. This means that majority of the respondents visit the public library. Also, the result shows that 27.1% of the respondents visit the library very often. Again, 23.4% of the public library users visit the library often. The same table shows further that 26.6% of the sample population visit occasionally while 22.9% of the sample population rarely visit the public library. This implies that majority of the respondents visit the public library occasionally, which indicates low use of the public libraries in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question 2: For what purpose do users patronize public libraries?

In order to establish the purpose for which users patronize the public libraries in Akwa Ibom State, the respondents were asked to choose from the statements the option that expresses their mind.

Table 2. Purpose of Patronage of public library in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Purpose of patronage of public library	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Mean	Std. Dev
Purpose of patronage	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)		
I patronize the library to study	305(80.3)	58(15.3)	3(.8)	14(3.7)	3.72	.663
I patronize the library to do given school assignment	174(45.8)	96(25.3)	63(16.6)	47(12.4)	3.04	1.058
I patronize the library to read journals	106(27.9)	106(27.9)	99(26.1)	69(18.2)	2.66	1.072
I patronize the library to borrow books	107(28.2)	75(19.7)	97(25.5)	101(26.6)	2.49	1.16
I patronize the library to make use of the internet	101(27.4)	75(19.7)	85(22.4)	116(30.5)	2.44	1.187
I patronize the library to read newspapers	78(20.5)	100(26.3)	102(26.8)	100(26.3)	2.41	1.087
Average Mean Score					2.79	1.03

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

Decision rule if mean is: 1-1.49= strongly disagree; 1.5-2.49= Disagree; 2.5-3.49= Agree; 3.5-4.0= Strongly Agree

Table 2, shows the purpose of patronage of the public libraries in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The results show that the respondents agreed that they patronize the library for different purposes with the average mean score of 2.79. Furthermore, the result indicates that the respondents patronize the public libraries specifically for study (mean = 3.73), followed by to do given assignment in school with mean score of 3.04 and to read journals with mean score of (Mean = 2.66). While to read newspaper had the lowest mean score (mean = 2.41). These results evident the fact portrayed on table 4.1, which show that the highest number of those who visit the library were majorly students.

Question 3: What Marketing Strategies do public libraries in Akwa Ibom, Nigeria, used?

The results from table 3 shows the marketing strategy used in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Table 3. Marketing Strategy used in Public library in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Marketing Strategy Indicate from the following the marketing strategy used in promoting public library services	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Mean	Std. Dev
Promotion	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)		
Library services are promoted with the use of radio	3(8)	7 (1.8)	171(45.0)	199(52.4)	1.51	.579
Library services are made known to users through television.	11(2.9)	7(1.8)	191(50.3)	171(45.0)	1.63	.668
Services of the library are promoted through social media.	5(1.3)	9(2.4)	131(34.5)	235(61.8)	1.43	.610
Posters and flyers are used to promote services in my library.	70(18.4)	151(39.7)	105(27.6)	54(14.2)	2.62	.943
Average Mean Score					1.80	0.70
Place						
The library web page is easily accessed by users.	4(1.1)	8(2.1)	137(36.1)	231(60.8)	1.43	.593
The library makes its collection titles available online.	7(1.8)	6(1.6)	164(43.2)	203(53.4)	1.52	.627
Users can discourse one on one with library staff at any point in time.	143(37.6)	140(36.8)	57(15.0)	40(10.5)	3.02	.974
User education programmes are also done online.	8(2.1)	12(3.2)	140(36.8)	220(57.9)	1.49	.664
Average Mean Score					1.87	0.71
Product						
Current awareness services (CAS)	221(58.2)	123(32.4)	29(7.6)	7(1.8)	3.47	.717
Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)	83(21.8)	202(53.2)	71(18.7)	24(6.3)	2.91	.807
Lending/Borrowing services	147(38.7)	89(23.4)	108(28.4)	36(9.5)	1.022	2.91
Binding services	33(8.7)	32(8.4)	258(67.9)	57(15.0)	2.11	.756
Photocopy services	24 (6.3)	22 (5.8)	273 (71.8)	61(16.1)	2.02	.687
Abstract and indexing services	30 (7.9)	41 (10.8)	247 (65.0)	62 (16.3)	2.10	.760
Average Mean Score					2.27	1.10
Grand Mean					1.88	0.83

Source: Field Survey, 2021

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

Decision rule if mean is: 1-1.49= Strongly disagree; 1.5-2.49= Disagree; 2.5-3.49= Agree; 3.5-4.0= Strongly Agree

Table 3 reveals the marketing strategy used in promoting public library services in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. From the analysis on table 4.4 and the grand mean score 1.88, it is evident that library services are rarely marketed in this study locale. However, the average mean score of 2.27 shows that the respondents agree that product is the most marketing strategy used in public libraries in Akwa Ibom State. One could infer that this poor marketing strategy could be the reason for low patronage of public libraries in this study locale. The results show that the respondents disagreed on public library services being promoted with the use of radio (Mean = 1.51, Std. Dev = .579), through television (Mean = 1.63, Std. Dev = .668), and social media, (Mean = 1.43, Std. Dev = .610).

In terms of the items under place marketing strategy, the library users strongly disagreed that public library web page is easily accessed by users (Mean = 1.43, Std. Dev = .593). Also the users disagreed that public library makes its collection titles available online (Mean = 1.52, Std. Dev = .627). However the respondents agreed that public library users can discourse one on one with library staff at any point in time (Mean = 3.02, Std. Dev = .974). Also the library users strongly disagreed that user education programmes are also done online, (Mean = 1.49, Std. Dev = .664). The average mean score shows that the library users disagreed on the marketing strategies of place component (Mean = 1.87, Std. Dev = .71).

In terms of Product marketing strategy items, the library users agreed that public library offer Current awareness services (CAS) (Mean = 3.47, Std. Dev = .717). Also the respondents agreed that public library offers Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) (Mean = 2.91, Std. Dev = .807). Also the library users strongly disagreed that public library offer Lending/Borrowing services (Mean = 1.02, Std. Dev = 2.91). Also the library users disagreed that public library offers Binding services (Mean = 2.11, Std. Dev = .756). The library users equally disagreed that public library offers Photocopy services (Mean = 2.02, Std. Dev = .687). The library users also disagreed that public library offers Abstract and Indexing services (Mean = 2.10, Std. Dev = .760). Finally, the average mean score shows that the library users also disagreed on the marketing strategies of product component (Mean = 2.27, Std. Dev = 1.1).

Presentation and Analysis of Research Hypothesis

In this section of the work, the research hypothesis which was formulated in chapter one is evaluated to enable the researcher arrive at a conclusion on the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variables thereby fulfilling research objectives four.

Decision Rule of the Hypothesis:

The level of significance for the study is pre-set at 0.05. The hypothesis states that marketing strategy will not significantly influence public library patronage. The decision rule for this hypothesis test is that if the p-value which is the level of significance or probability is less than or equal to the pre-set value of significance ($p < .05$), the null hypothesis, H_0 , is rejected and if the p-value is greater than alpha ($p > .05$), the null hypothesis, H_0 , is accepted.

Research Hypothesis one

H_{01} : Marketing Strategy will not significantly influence public library patronage in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Table 4. Marketing Strategy influence on Patronage of Public Library Correlations

		MARKETING_STRATEGY	LIBRARY PATRONAGE
MARKETING_STRATEGY	Pearson Correlation	1	.954**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	380	380
LIBRARY PATRONAGE	Pearson Correlation	.954**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	380	380

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Result from table 4 above revealed that marketing strategy significantly influenced patronage of public library in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The correlation result table also revealed that marketing strategy positively significantly influenced patronage of public library in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, ($r = .954$, $p < 0.05$). The result shows that marketing strategy can result in 95.4% higher influence ($r = .954$) on patronage of public library in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that marketing strategy will not significantly influence public library patronage in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, is hereby rejected and re-stated that marketing strategy significantly influences public library patronage in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The result further implies that advanced standard marketing strategy will strongly influenced the patronage of public library in Akwa Ibom.

Table 5. Marketing strategy influence on patronage of public library regression

Regression analysis of marketing strategy influence on public library patronage						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-3.675	.288		-12.779	.000
	MARKETING_STRATEGY	.418	.007	.953	60.829	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Public Library Patronage
b. $R = .953$; $R^2 = .903$; Adjusted- $R^2 = .907$; $F(1, 3700.193)$; $Sig. = 0.000$

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Interpretation

The result in the table above reveals that the independent variable has a negative coefficient, which is an indication that marketing strategy positively influences public library patronage ($R = .953$; $R^2 = .903$; Adjusted- $R^2 = .907$; $F(1, 3700.193)$; $Sig. = 0.000$). The result also shows an R value of 0.953 which reveals that there is 95.3% strong positive correlation between marketing strategy and public library patronage. The R^2 of 0.903 reveals that the independent variable (marketing strategy) accounts for 90% of the variations in public library patronage of informational services/resources.

The results further shows that the coefficient of marketing ($\beta = .418$) is positive which indicates that an improvement (i.e. 1% increase) in the marketing strategy in public library in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, will lead to an improvement (i.e. 41.8% increase) in the patronage of public library resources and services. The F statistics of 3700.193 which is significant at $p < 0.05$, further gives us empirical evidence that marketing strategy has a statistically significant influence on public library patronage. Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that marketing strategy will not significantly influence public library patronage in Akwa Ibom State Nigeria, was rejected.

Resultant Conceptual Framework of the study

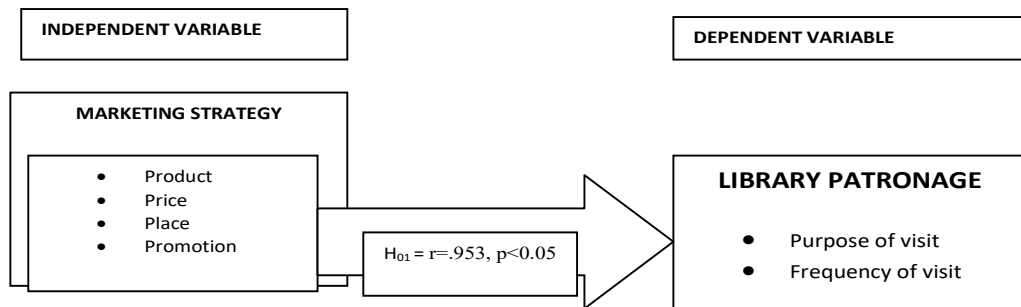


Figure 4. Resultant model of marketing strategy and public library patronage
 Source: Researcher, (2021)

The resultant conceptual framework shows that marketing strategy significantly influence public library patronage in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria based on the lone hypothesis used in the study. Hence the null hypothesis, H_{01} , was rejected and re-stated that marketing strategy positively significantly influences public library patronage in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The result of this study established that public library users in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria constituted both males and females. In terms of marital status, the singles were more among public library users. The library users of ages 16 to 25 years had the highest frequency of 63.4% and students had the highest percentage of 58.7 in terms of occupation of library users. This implies that the patronage of public libraries in the said state of study is more of students.

The result of this study shows that there was low frequency of users visit to the public library in Akwa Ibom State, as the highest respondents indicated accessional visit to the public library. The findings of this study is in line with that of Umeozor and Afolabi (2013), who established that there was low students response to library usage in the University of Uyo, Port-Harcourt and Calabar. On the purpose of patronage, the study found that the respondents mostly patronize the public library to study, to so school assignments and to read journals.

On the aspect of marketing strategy, the study established poor marketing strategies in the public libraries. Although the finding shows that the most marketing strategy used in the public libraries in Akwa Ibom State was product. The findings of this study corroborated that of Scicluna (2015) who established in

his research that there were neither marketing professionals nor any one’s primary job to promote library services in this study locale. Also, in line with this present study is Arumuru (2015) who found in his study titled “Marketing of academic libraries for effective services delivery” that the respondents were of the opinion that the library partially engage in marketing of its services. Further is Anafo (2014) who in his study of marketing strategies for information services: A case study of the Institute of Chartered Accountant Library, Ghana, found that there was no promotional program in the institute’s library and the authors concluded that the absence of promotional program led to poor utilization of the services at the library. The author advocated the adoption of marketing strategies to increase funding and patronage in the study area.

The result showed that marketing strategy positively and significantly influenced public library patronage in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The result of this analysis confirms the position of Adegbite (2020) that library staff should endeavour to market their products and services to the appropriate users who need them as at when necessary so as to increase the users’ patronage. In the same vein, Anafo (2014) harped on the importance of marketing strategies for libraries to increase funding and patronage. He posited that there was need for library to embark on aggressive marketing service. Arumuru

(2015) equally advocated for marketing of library services because of the immense benefits that accrue from marketing strategies. Joshua and Micheal (2020) stated also that the major need for marketing library services and resources were to achieve the objectives of the library and to identify the information needs of users.

CONCLUSION

The roles of public libraries in the history and development of the citizens cannot be over-emphasized and they help in the promotion of literacy and development of the people. Therefore the public libraries should be patronized by the citizens of the state or country. This study has established that there is a significant influence of marketing strategy on public library patronage in Akwa Ibom State. It also established low patronage of public libraries. The study therefore concludes that there is low library patronage in the study area because of inadequate marketing strategies in the public libraries in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. Librarians in these public libraries should employ different marketing strategies in the library to attract more public users.
2. The supervisory agency should provide information and communication technology services like internet to attract users to the library.
3. Librarians and library officers should strive to provide more online services such as WhatsApp platform, Instagram, etc. to the patrons.
4. Also marketing training for librarians and library officers to enhance their marketing capacity should be embarked on by Ministry of Education, the supervisory agent of public library. This template will usher in a complete turnaround in the visibility and patronage of public library in Akwalbom State, Nigeria.

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