

Marketing Strategies Used by Universities' Central Library

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Abstract

University libraries are currently facing a variety of challenges concerned with application of new information technologies in the digital age. To attract users, librarian and its staff need to generate awareness of available services and resources by using effective marketing strategies. This research investigates marketing strategies employed at Universities' Central Library which is a leading university library in Myanmar. The purpose of the research is to find ways to promote library services and resources as effectively as possible. The research adopted survey research method. The research instrument for the study was questionnaire. This paper reveals practical solutions, ways and means of marketing principals for the academic library services and then different types of libraries. Librarians may use the results to reflect on the effectiveness of these techniques, to better understand various promotion techniques. This will enable them to promote library services and resources more effectively in the future.

Key words: Library Marketing, Marketing Strategies, Academic Libraries, Promoting Library Services and Information Products

1. Introduction

As libraries are considered as treasures of knowledge, all types of libraries in the world are full of reading materials which consist of books, journals, films, images, manuscripts, audio visual materials and so on. Nowadays with the help of information technology, Internet has brought several opportunities as well as challenges to be effective library and information services. Library users can now access information online irrespective of their location and visit private information providers, cybercafé and no longer solely rely on the library. As librarians understand the confusion associated with information overload, it is their responsibility to device means to keep the students aware of the shortcomings of unevaluated Internet information.¹ Marketing is being considered one aspect of competencies needed and critical among library and information science professionals. Library Marketing is the link between the library user's needs and its resources and services. The goal of library marketing is the client satisfaction on library services and resources. Effective marketing skills are needed to increase awareness of the library's value and to expand its user base.

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¹ Azuka O. Chegwe and Sebastian E. Anaehobi, "Academic Librarians Perception and Attitude Towards Marketing of Library Services in Delta State, Nigeria," *Library Philosophy and Practice* (July 2015): 1, accessed January 14, 2021, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281126139>.

Although priority task of all libraries in the world is preservation of this knowledge, all libraries need to promote these resources possessed by the libraries. Today, many libraries with the help of information technology have their own websites on which all kinds of materials are accessible with its bibliographic details and mechanism to promotion and marketing of service.²

The challenges of budget cuts, increased user base, the rapid growth of materials, rising costs, networking demands, competition by database vendors, and complexity in information requirements are forcing the professionals to adopt marketing to improve the management of library and information centers.³

The library has many products and services to make marketing. Each library needs to identify what it wishes to market and how it does. Marketing is not just about developing and promoting new services and products but also about bringing awareness to clients of existing services and products and determining their appropriateness.⁴

Because of information explosion, library users' expectations and requirements are changing from time to time. Library has to try to meet users' needs. Librarian and its staff need to extend promotion and cooperation with users and marketing their services to attract more users to the library.

Marketing is regarded as a managerial tool that is assisting libraries to face challenges now and in the future. It is a way to achieve users' satisfaction. Librarianship's positive attitude towards marketing is a prerequisite for a successful plan and execution to market library products and services.

The methods of marketing become to change from print media to social media such as blog, Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, instant messaging, etc. that can be used to foster the usage of library sources and services. Thus, the libraries adopt tools and techniques for marketing to meet the diverse user groups.

This study identifies marketing strategies used by Universities' Central Library. The study analyzed, discussed and drew conclusion on the possible ways of marketing academic library services for an effective service delivery.

² S. K. Patil and Pranita Pradhan, "Library Promotion Practices and Marketing of Library Services: A Role of Library Professional," *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Science* 133 (May 2014): 249-254, accessed January 14, 2021, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.04.191>.

³ Dr. M. Madhusudhan, "Marketing of Library and Information Services and Products in University Libraries: A Case Study of Goa University Library," *Library Philosophy and Practice* (March 2008), 1, accessed January 14, 2021, <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/175>

⁴ Shripad V. Chandratre and Meghana S. Chandratre, "Marketing of Library and Information Services," *Journal of Commerce & Management Thought* 6, no.1 (2015): 162-175, accessed January 14, 2021, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5958/0976-478x.2015.00011.7>.

1.1 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The present study mainly to identify marketing methods which are used by Universities' Central Library. The objectives of the study are as follow:

- To reveal the techniques adopted by Universities' Central Library in marketing its resources and services.
- To provide practicable guidelines for marketing of library services suitable for academic libraries in Myanmar.
- To identify the challenges and problems facing librarians in terms of marketing library services.
- To make suggestions on how the marketing of library services improved to the academic librarians in Myanmar.
- To establish the level of involvement of the library professionals in marketing of library services

1.2 Scope of the Study

There are two university libraries in the University of Yangon campus: University of Yangon Library and Universities' Central Library. This study focuses on marketing strategies used by Universities' Central Library. As Universities' Central Library is an academic library in Myanmar, this paper intends to cover the techniques of library marketing services of academic libraries in Myanmar.

1.3 Research Questions

This following are answerable inquiry into specific questions of the study.

1. Which types of services are provided by Universities' Central Library?
2. What guidelines are needed for marketing of library resources and services suitable for academic libraries in Myanmar?
3. What are the challenges encountered by the librarians in library marketing?
4. What are the strategies to be adopted for marketing of library and information services in academic libraries in Myanmar?

1.4 Method of the Study

In conducting research, survey method was used to obtain reliable data. The research instrument for the study was designed by questionnaire. This questionnaire was sent to the Librarian and Chief Librarian (Head) of Universities' Central Library. Besides, the author interviewed Librarians and its staff to obtain reliable information.

1.5 Research Outcome

This study presents the concept and techniques of marketing the academic library services. Based on these findings, academic librarians in Myanmar may use the results to reflect on the effectiveness of these techniques and to understand various promotion techniques. Thus, this research will enable them to promote academic library services and resources more effectively in the future.

2. Literature Review

A literature review is an overview of the previously published research contributions on a specific topic. This research reviewed some of related literature concerned with library marketing strategies used in academic libraries. The purpose of the literature review was to discover the best marketing and promotion practices for the academic libraries in order to develop a consistent marketing plan for university library and other academic libraries in the region as well as rest of the academic libraries across the world.

Mohammad Aslam studied marketing strategies for academic libraries in the 21st Century. This article focuses on how the library should market its facilities and resources to the new generation of libraries in the 21st century. This paper explores the idea of marketing that is a vital component for libraries, and includes some suggestions of marketing strategies proposed to remind librarians, and information professionals.⁵

Nazifa Bawa Yusuf did a research entitled “Marketing Strategies Used for Promotion of Library Information Services in Kaduna State Public Library, Nigeria”. The objectives of the study are to identify the type of marketing strategy adopted by Kaduna state Public Libraries, and to assess the marketing strategies adopted by Kaduna State Public Library. Key findings from the study strategies adopted in the libraries and it show that ineffective strategies impact to the promotion of library services. Solutions have been provided to the challenges affecting promotion of library services in Kaduna state public libraries.⁶

Ukubeyinje Eda Rita and, Sandra Ejiro surveyed strategies for marketing library services and information products in College of Education. This survey suggested that librarian must know his audience to pass the message. The personal brand is an effort to regulate or handle what

⁵ Mohammad Aslam, “Marketing Strategies for Academic Libraries in the 21st Century,” *Journal of Library & Information Science* Vol.8 No.1 (March 2018): 1, accessed February 14, 2021, <http://irjllis.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/1-IR459-81>.

⁶ Nazifa Bawa Yusuf, “Marketing Strategies Used for Promotion of Library Information Services in Kaduna State Public Library, Nigeria,” (master's thesis, Kenyatta University, 2019), xi, accessed February 14, 2021, <https://ir-library.ku.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/123456789/19511>.

individuals believe of you and to magnify the beneficial features. Academic librarians can create the most positive stereotype by customizing library and information services.⁷

Lolade F. Osinulu, Sowemimo R. Adekunmisi, Oluwatoyin S. Okewale, and Fadekemi O. Oyewusi studied marketing strategies used by librarians in a State University Libraries. The study recommended use of ICT and social media tools; teaching of innovative marketing concepts and principles in Nigerian Library schools and aggressiveness on the part of librarians.⁸

Aye Mya Mya Oo studied perception and attitudes of academic librarians towards marketing of library services in Mandalay Region in 2020. The research focused on 17 academic libraries situated in Mandalay Region. These libraries are under the various ministries in Myanmar. The research highlighted the challenges and problems faced by the librarians for marketing of library services and resources. It suggested on how to promote services and resources of academic libraries.⁹

3. Data Analysis

I. Library Services

Library services focuses on procedures and functions of maintaining library collection. Behind the user services, operation services are included such as acquisition, cataloguing, classification, and management of collections. As the Universities' Central Library is one of the academic libraries, its users are students, faculty members and administrative staff. It provides a number of services to its patrons through various ways. Image of library is based on providing services. According to the vision of the Universities' Central Library, it delivers services and information to meet the needs of teaching and research by collaborating with all universities and colleges in Myanmar. The providing services are circulation, reference, reading room, Internet, Wifi Free access, interlibrary loan, digitizing service, microfilming service, and photocopying service. Thus, it can be said that it provides not only common services but also special services.

⁷ Ukubeyinje Eda Rita and, Sandra Ejiro "Strategies for Marketing Library Services and Information Products in College of Education," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* Volume III, Issue IX (September 2019): 29-33, accessed February 14, 2021, www.rsisinternational.org,

⁸ Lolade F. Osinulu, Sowemimo R. Adekunmisi, Oluwatoyin S. Okewale, and Fadekemi O. Oyewusi, "Marketing Strategies Used by Librarians in a State University Library, " *University of Dar es Salaam Library Journal*, Vol. 13 No. 2 (2018): 1, accessed February 14, 2021, <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/udslj/article/view/184596>, 1.

⁹ Aye Mya Mya Oo, "Perception and Attitudes of Academic Librarians towards Marketing of Library Services in Mandalay Region" (master's thesis, Yadanabon University, 2021), 4.

(i) Common Services

Common services are basic services or essential services for library. It includes circulation service, reference service, reading room service and the Internet access. In the academic year of 2018-2019, over 12000 students enrolled to the University of Yangon. According to library membership of 2018-2019 Academic Year, 663 students, 87 faculty members, and 293 administrative staff and external researchers, totally 1043 are registered as membership to the library. Number of users are listed and shown in the following table.

Table 1. List of Memberships in 2018-2019 Academic Year

Types of Users	No of Members
Faculty Members	87
Students	663
External Users and Administrative Staff	293
Total	1043

Source: Survey

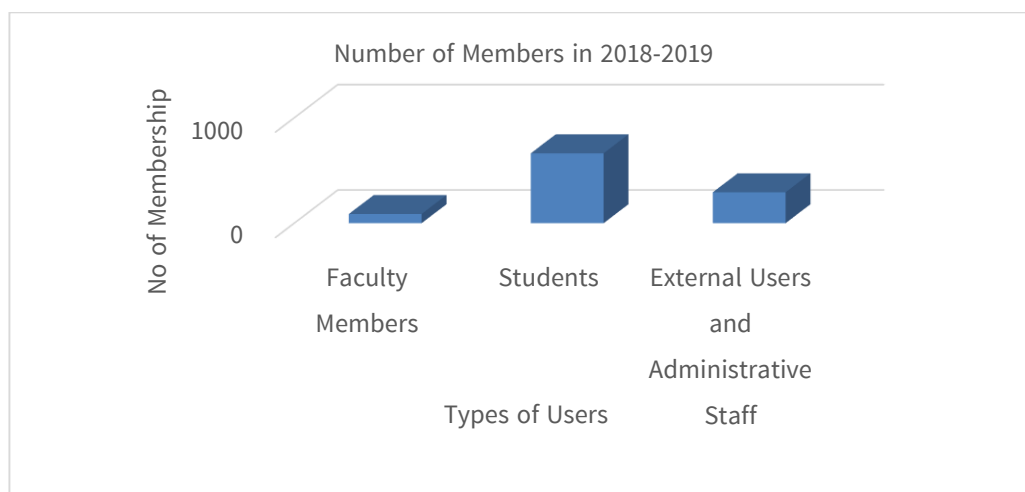


Figure 1. List of Membership in 2018-2019 Academic Year

There are three major categories of library users such as Faculty members, Students and Administrative staffs because of academic library. But, external users can be used the library and enrolled as library member. External users include researchers and scholars from other universities and outsiders. The above graph shows that most of the members are students among the other types of users. Thus, it can be said that students are more interested using library resources than others.

Table 2. Statistics of Users in 2018-2019 Academic Year

Department	Number of Students	Number of Faculty Members	Number of External Users	Number of Staff	Total
Circulation	2141	224	644	214	3223
Reading Room	214	148	105	0	467
Internet Access	531	354	0	0	885

Source: Survey

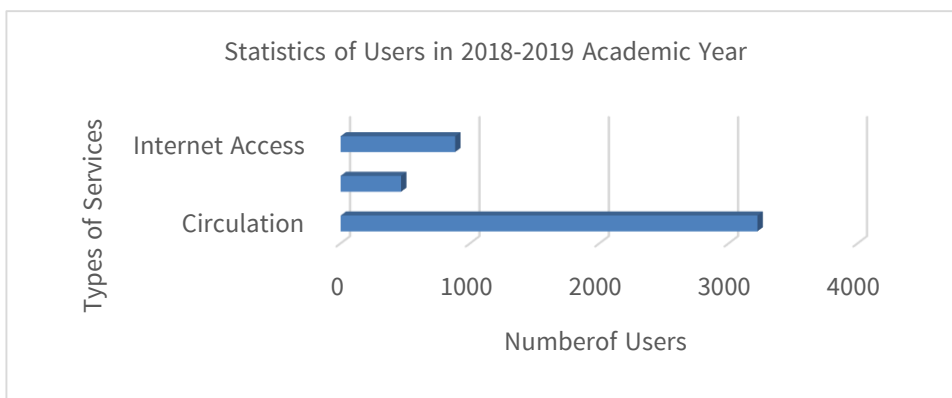


Figure 2. Statistics of Users in 2018-2019 Academic Year

By these statistics, among user services, circulation service is more attractive than others.

(ii) Special Services

The following services are provided as special services. Regarding new arrival materials, users are informed by the use of displaying these materials, announcing on the noticeboard and social media through Facebook. Besides, chief librarians and librarians inform the new arrival materials to the departments within two weeks.

Interlibrary Loan service is a service whereby a user of one library can borrow materials that are owned by another library. All the enrolled members are eligible for interlibrary loan facility. Universities' Central Library has cooperated with academic libraries under the Ministry of Education.

University library usually provides 'user orientation' or 'user initiation' programme for the new students every year in the beginning of the academic year. Library orientation can be called user education, library instruction, library tour, bibliographic instructions. As library orientation introduces about its holdings and services for users, it helps new students become familiar with providing services and sources. The Universities' Central Library usually performs the programme at the beginning of the academic year and sometimes also occasionally.

The library always holds regular and irregular events regarding skill of information literacy that shall contribute to improve students' and researchers' information literacy. Topics in these events are "Introduction to E-Resources", "How to Access E- Resources", "How to Write and Access Citation Manager "Zotero", Plagiarism Checker, "How to Access Union Catalogue", etc.

Because of a large number of databases available on the Internet, users need to have skills of information literacy. The Universities' Central Library collects electronic resources including online databases, full-text journal articles and indexes, e-books, newspapers, magazines, etc. The Universities' Central Library provides Online Database Access Training to have information literacy skills. There are various types of information sources and services. Users need to know how to use library materials and services which are available. User education is necessary for new users. User education aims to enable the students use the library resources effectively for the purpose of learning, research and recreation.

The library usually performs user education by using ways of training programme, workshops, lecture, audio-visual presentations, publications and so on. Name of training programmes are "Information Literacy and Preservation and Conservation", "Zoom Application and Introduction to Google Class Room", "Citations and Referencing in Research Support for Librarians and Library Staff for Upper Myanmar and Lower Myanmar During COVID-19".

The library provides reading competition and book reviews programme to enhance readers' reading skills. Regarding publicity, pamphlets and contribution of articles in University magazine are means of delivering information of library services and sources. Library website is used for dissemination of information related to the functions and activities performed by the Universities' Central Library. Website address of UCL is www.uclmyanmar.com. A Library Web page serves as a promotional tool for advertising library services and electronic resources on the web.

II. Level of Staff Qualification

Library staff is one of the greatest human resources of any library. According to the academic year 2018-2019, there are 35 staffs in the Universities' Central Library. After February, 2021, the total number of staff was changed into 22 totally. Among them, some of them are LIS degree holders, some are BA/BSc degree holders and the rest are undergraduates. The following tables shows organization structure and level of staff's qualifications.

Table 3. Organization Structure of UCL in 2021

Designation	Number of Staff
Head /Chief Librarian	1
Librarian	2
Assistant Librarian	4
Library Assistance -2	3
Library Assistance -3	2
Library Assistance -4	3
Assistant Computer Operator-2	1
Account-2	1
Peon	2
Gate Keeper	2
Cleaner	1
Total	22

Source: Survey

Table 4. Level of Staff Qualification in 2021

Qualification	Number of Staff	Percentage
PhD (LIS)	2	9
MRes (LIS)	3	13.6
MA (LIS)	5	22.7
DLIS/ DLIM	3	13.6
BA/BSc	2	9
Undergraduate	7	31.8
Total	22	100

Source: Survey

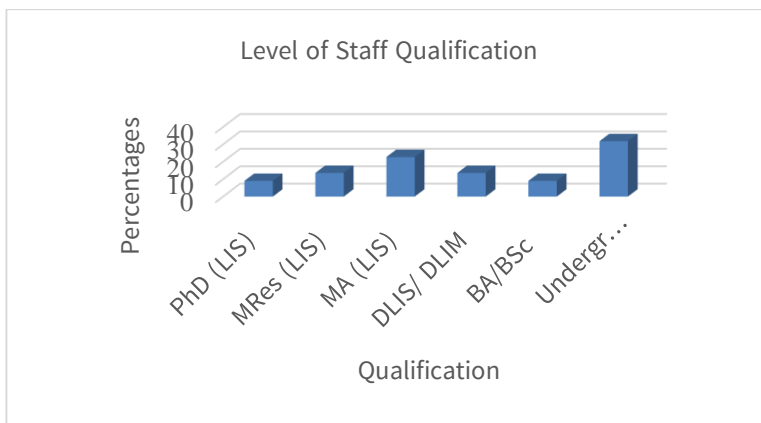


Figure 3. Level of Staff Qualification in 2021

Their educational level can be grouped by professional and non-professional. Professionals are Library and Information Studies Degree holders and non-professional includes any graduates and under graduates.

Table 5. Frequency of Profession and Non-Professional

Professional	Non professional	
	Graduate	Undergraduate
13	2	7
59.1%	9.1%	31.8%

Source: Survey

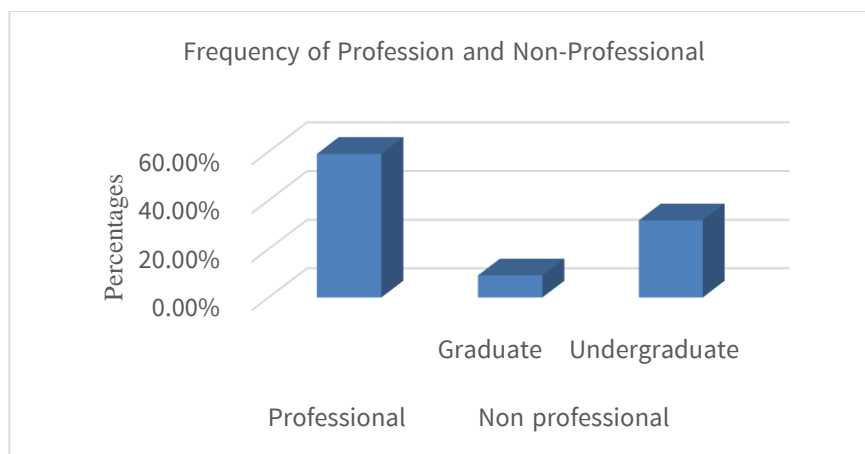


Figure 4. Frequency of Profession and Non-Professional

According to Figure 3, staff at the level of undergraduate are the most numbers among the staffs. But, these staff are divided into two groups such as professional and non-professional. Figure 4 shows that 59.1% of staff are degree holders in Library and Information Studies who are professionals, 9.1% of staff are graduates and 31.8% are undergraduates. Among the professionals, 9 % staffs are PhD degree holders, 13.6 % are MRes, 22.7% are MA, and 13.6 % are DLIS. Thus, it can be said that most of staff are degree holders in library science.

4 Discussion

The Universities' Central Library provides not only common services but also special services. These are circulation, reference, reading room, Internet Wifi Free access, interlibrary loan, digitizing service, microfilming service, and photocopying service. Circulation service is the most attractive service among the services.

In 2021, 22 staffs are working in the library. Among them, 59.1% are degree holders in library science but 31.8% are undergraduates. The survey shows that majority of the staffs have

degree in library and information studies as indicated by 59.1%. The most of these undergraduates are supporting staffs including clerical, peon, gatekeepers, and cleaner.

The information published in the magazines should be easily readable and noticeable. Chief librarian and librarians usually contribute articles in University magazines and newsletters about library services and sources. To recognize new arrival materials, the library shows and inform by displaying, announcing on the noticeboard and social media through Facebook within two weeks. For user education, the library provides training programme for online databases access, information literacy, and so on.

5. Conclusion

From the findings, the survey pointed out marketing strategies used by Universities' Central Library. The essence of library is to provide effective and efficient information resources and services to its intended users. The university library is a part of an academic community who are students, faculty members, and researchers. The librarians and library staffs are trying to find out the appropriate ways to meet needs of the students and faculty. Librarian and staff must realize the importance of library marketing to promote activities. Because of IT age, new technologies such as YouTube, blogs, wikis attract users. Among the university libraries in Myanmar, Universities' Central Library has own website. Library Website is necessary for service and resources promotion. It can be accessed on Facebook as <https://www.facebook.com/Universities-Central-Library>.

The limited budget provision and the advent of new technology and its application in libraries are prohibitive and challenges for library marketing. Nevertheless, it can be noted that Universities' Central Library is trying to serve for its users by using both traditional methods and some of the modern techniques in the world of Myanmar academic libraries. The survey pointed that only 5.5% of students registered as library membership. So, it is shown that librarians need to be continuous efforts for awareness of students. Feedback is one of the best ways to develop more effective marketing strategies. At the entrance of library, the desktop display, the posters, library exhibits, pen are inexpensive. It can attract users' interest and awareness.

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