



## A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION MARKETING STRATEGIES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES FOR SUPPORTING THE FIFTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN IMO AND RIVERS STATES

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** This study was designed to analyse the information marketing strategies utilized by academic libraries to support the adoption of emerging technologies in the Fifth Industrial Revolution (5IR); ascertain the roles of information marketing strategies in enhancing the visibility and relevance of academic libraries in the 5IR and find out the challenges faced by academic libraries in leveraging information marketing strategies to support the adoption of emerging technologies in the 5IR

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The study employed survey research design. The population of the study was 65 librarians in the two institutions studied – Imo State University Owerri library and Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku library. Researchers'-made questionnaire rated with four point Likert scale was used as instrument for data collection. The data collected were organized in tabular form and analysed using simple mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and Standard Deviation (Std.) using 2.50 as the cut-off point.

**Findings:** It was revealed that: the academic libraries utilize some information marketing strategies to support the adoption of emerging technologies and learning experience for students and faculty; information marketing strategies, academic libraries can enhance their visibility and relevance and academic libraries face challenges in leveraging information marketing strategies to support the adoption of emerging technologies in the 5IR.

**Practical Implications:** The findings of this study have revealed the relevance of information marketing strategies in this information age especially the fifth industrial revolution era. With so many media competing with the library, academic libraries need to step up their marketing base to create more awareness of their products and services, else they will go into extinction. To achieve this, academic libraries should partner with faculty and students to create maker spaces or innovation labs to showcase emerging technologies and provide hands on experience. Also there is need for increased library budget and training opportunities for the library staff.

**Originality/Value:** This work has not been published in any journal before. Its originality lies in its ability to discover the relevance of information marketing services in academic libraries to support the 5th Industrial Revolution in Imo and Rivers States.

**Keywords:** Leveraging, Information, Marketing, Strategies, Academic Libraries, 5th Industrial Revolution

### Introduction

In recent years, there has been exponential growth of educational institutions as well as libraries in pursuit of the achievement of objectives of higher education. The relevance of libraries in these institutions has also increased in view of the trend towards improving quality assurance. It has, among other things affected the roles and performance of academic libraries as well. The academic library is established to further the cause of education which goal it has been serving since inception. Academic

library is a user-centred service agency. However, the present emphasis on service suggests a proactive stance rather than reactive one. There is therefore need to promote library services not just for increased awareness of what the library is offering but also quality service. This leads the librarian toward marketing the library services to support the teaching and research objectives of tertiary institutions.

Marketing means different things to different people the central aim is same. Marketing refers to those activities carried

out by a business venture to promote its products or services either online or traditionally. Marketing according to Jestin and Parameswari cited in Echem and Alex-Nmecha (2019) involves activities such as identifying target market's needs, designing suitable services or products to meet their needs and the use of effective pricing, communication and distribution to inform, motivate and serve the market. The basic aim of marketing in libraries and information centres is to know and understand the users so as to satisfy their information needs optimally. Marketing today spreads its wings within defined services. In the context of libraries, marketing means sufficient change in the traditional attitude of librarians towards acquisition, organization, processing and retrieving information. The basis of library services should be to help its users to solve their information gathering and processing needs. Thus, the academic library must adjust its services, policies and procedures to the requirements of the users. Marketing strategy is essential to create awareness among users about library services in order to desire them, build understanding of the value of the services, increase the level of usage and expand the user base.

Factors such as: information explosion, technology revolution, escalating library costs and increasing competition by information providers and web-based commercial services providers have been identified by Adekunmisi cited in Benson, Udo-Anyanwu and Onuoha (2016) as being responsible for encouraging the library professionals to develop a marketing strategy to its operations and services. Broadly speaking, a market strategy is a process that can allow an organization to concentrate its limited resources on the greatest opportunities to increase use of services and products and achieve a sustainable advantage. Hence, marketing strategies in the context of academic library can be taken to be techniques, plans and tactics used by libraries to create awareness so as to attract library patrons to ensure

effective usage of information resources and services. To throw more light on marketing strategies, Uwandu and Okere (2022) citing Edom and Edom assert that marketing strategies are laid down plans or principles that an organization (in this context academic libraries) adopts in order to sell its products and maximize profit. Nevertheless, academic libraries embrace marketing strategies to stay relevant in the competitive world of information age.

Information marketing strategies involve utilizing various marketing techniques to promote and sell information-based products or services, such as courses, e-books or consulting services. Information marketing strategies also refer to the plans, principles and tactics used to promote library resources, services, expertise and disseminate valuable information to the academic community. These strategies however, aim to promote library resources and services to students, faculty and staff, it also encourages active use of library resources/ services and collaborate with academic departments and units to support research and learning. With the onset of the Fifth Industrial Revolution (5IR), characterized by the integration of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things, Nwobu *et al* (2024) stressed that the role of libraries is undergoing a significant transformation. Notwithstanding, information marketing in the fifth industrial revolution (5IR) or library 5.0 refer to the use of advanced technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), block-chain and the internet of things (IoT) to create, distribute and promote valuable information and services.

The fifth industrial revolution (5IR) or library 5.0 is transforming the way humans live, think, work, interact with technology and work with one another (Petcu *et al*, 2020). This era marks a significant shift characterized by the convergence of cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, blockchain, biotechnology, and advanced robotics, among others

(Alojaiman, 2023). Thus, the current era of Information and Communication Technology is at its peak of major changes compared to the emergence of the first, second, third and fourth industrial revolution. The presence of the fifth industrial revolution has affected all sectors of life including institutions and sectors providing information services which are none other than academic libraries. Industry 5.0 (fifth industrial revolution) is not just about technological advancement; it is more about creating a more sustainable humane-centered, efficient future for industry and society as a whole. Hence, this study aims at examining how information marketing strategies can be leveraged in academic libraries to support the fifth industrial revolution using Imo State University Owerri library and Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku library.

### Statement of the Problem

In the last decade significant changes have taken place all over the world and these changes have been posing challenges to various professions and professionals. First, the information revolution triggered by personal computers and network has been one major change which brought about a revolution in the information profession. Libraries known for their building with stacks of books and periodicals with a sign of “silence” all around is tilting towards extinction, in the near future that users may not need to run to the library or librarian for information.

Secondly, the wind of globalization, marketization and privatization has swept away the long-held political and economic belief; Government and social sponsors have been propagating that social institutions become self-sufficient if they are to purposefully work and demonstrate their relevance and competence to their users. Thus, the age-old generosity for the socially desirable institutions (libraries) is drying up because of the change in the political outlook and the economic squeeze that the government, donors and sponsors are facing as librarians and information managers are

asked to generate revenue to become self-sustaining as much as possible.

Thirdly, countries are clamouring for immediate fulfillment of ever-rising social and economic expectations and are therefore asking what information can do for the overall national development. Developing countries like Nigeria are no longer interested in information for the sake of information, knowledge for the sake of knowledge or education for the sake of education. The new thought wave is that information is power only if one uses it, not if one stores it. Information appears to be “life saver” for the developing world. As a consequence of the radical changes in the last decade, information revolution, globalization, marketization, privatization and using information for development – the patrons interested in the information services and products have been on the increase. It is however worthy to note that, the information age has truly arrived – time has come for librarians to rethink, shield many old beliefs and find new ways of doing things. It is against this backdrop that the researchers sought to identify the knowledge gap in this literature on leveraging information marketing strategies in academic libraries to support the fifth industrial revolution in

### Objectives of the Study

The general aim of the study is to examine leveraging information marketing strategies in academic libraries to support the 5th Industrial Revolution in Imo and Rivers States. Specifically, it sought to:

1. Identify the information marketing strategies utilized by academic libraries to support the adoption of emerging technologies in the 5IR.
2. Ascertain the roles of information marketing strategies in enhancing the visibility and relevance of academic libraries in the 5IR.
3. Find out the challenges faced by academic libraries in leveraging information marketing strategies to support the adoption of emerging technologies in the 5IR.

## Research Questions

The following research questions are guided the study:

1. What are the information marketing strategies utilized by academic libraries to support the adoption of emerging technologies in the 5IR?
2. What are the roles of information marketing strategies in enhancing the visibility and relevance of academic libraries in the 5IR?
3. What are the challenges faced by academic libraries in leveraging information marketing strategies to support the adoption of emerging technologies in the 5IR?

## Literature Review

Previously, libraries were the only source that users depended on for their information needs. With advancement in technology, information seeking behaviour of users is now tilting towards the internet such that the utilization of information resources and services provided by libraries are greatly affected. It becomes imperative for library professionals to devise ways of attracting users, satisfying their information needs, and improve the visibility of libraries. This is where marketing comes in. Bushari, Ayankola and Ladipo (2015) conceptualized marketing as the full range of activities that are undertaken in order to be certain of meeting customers' needs and receiving enough value in return for doing so. The enough value hereto referred, implies receiving enough in return of time, efforts and investment expended to provide the service or product offered.

Libraries are relatively new to marketing area. Marketing of library information and products and services is an area which is now beginning to attract the attention of research scholars, market researchers, and the business people. Libraries have traditionally been involved in library marketing through the display of fresh books, exhibitions, newsletters, user orientation programmes, library guide manufacturing and issuance, library week outreach and other advertising programmes

(Eda & Ukubeyinye, 2019). However, marketing helps organizations (academic libraries) to plan and coordinate all its activities and to gain knowledge about customers and also about itself.

In this ICT era and specifically the fifth Industrial Revolution (5IR), marketing has gone digital. This involves a wider range of marketing elements than traditional business marketing due to extra channels and marketing mechanisms available on the internet. Digital marketing involves using digital technologies like the internet, social media, search engines, and mobile devices to promote products or services and interact with potential consumers (Bala & Verma, 2018). Related to this, the existence of the society in 5.0 era has triggered an increasingly widespread digital connectivity and consumers are increasingly dependent on technology, and digital marketing is the key to success for companies (Roblek, *et al.*, 2020). Hence, to accomplish marketing goals in this digital era, organisations, including libraries are now adopting digital marketing to bring together customization and mass distribution. Horsfall (2020) sees marketing of library and information services in the digital age, as a way of making sure libraries and librarians meet their users' needs. This will further help solve most needs of the users and also enable them to visit the library if they know their needs are being met. Consequently, the fundamental basis for the development of digital marketing in the business environment is the internet; which is the technology that permits the use of electronic marketing techniques and has allowed the creation of the World Wide Web (www) as we know it today. Unfortunately, Edewor *et al.* (2016) discovered that there is low level use of social media such as Facebook, blogs, Twitter, e-mail alerts for marketing.

To leverage information marketing strategies in academic libraries, all employees working in academic libraries have to think about the best possible way to serve their patrons. Better put, the development of strategy enables an

organization to define a clear route and direction to can follow to achieve goals. Furthermore, Joshua and Michael (2020) revealed that, the major reason for marketing library service and resources is to achieve the objectives of the library and identify the information needs of users. In the same vein, Kutu and Olajide (2018), opined that, effective marketing provides means by which users are aware of the services of the library and their values. Furthermore, Ubogu (2021) asserted that, to contend with all competitors, libraries have to instigate different inventive products and services and employ different marketing tools to reach their patrons globally. Garoufallou *et al* as cited in Uwandu and Okere (2022), opined that, marketing strategies are essential because it uses a range of tools and resources which aims to promote and make potential and current customers aware of the brand, services and products of an organization.

Life skills, critical thinking and creativity must be adopted by librarians to enable them remain relevant in the fifth industrial revolution and to leverage on marketing of information resources/services in academic library, life skills, critical thinking and creativity must be adopted by librarians to enable them remain relevant in the fifth industrial revolution. Sajidan *et al* (2021) asserted that librarians must have 5IR ability and competences to be trusted by institutions. The fifth industrial revolution (5IR) also known as Library 5.0 heralds the integration of cutting-edge technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), robots, biotechnology and the Internet of Things (IoT) demanding individuals to possess critical skills such as creativity, critical thinking, adaptability, digital literacy, emotional intelligence, resilience and cross-cultural competency (Ikenga & Sijde, 2024).

In 5IR, librarians must as a matter of fact leverage tools like the Internet of Things (IoT), virtual and augmented reality and artificial intelligence (AI) to improve service delivery in libraries. Chisita, Shoko and Ngoaketse (2019), however opined that, librarians must also exhibit networking and

collaboration abilities to enhance the inclusiveness of academic library services. The fifth industrial revolution has begun to deeply penetrate the virtual world in the form of connecting humans, machines and data which are already everywhere known as Internet of Things (IoT). 5IR introduces flexible mass production technology, machines work independently or coordinate with human, control the production process by synchronizing time, unifying and adjusting production. Truth be told, the development of fifth industrial revolution certainly has a strong impact on the world of libraries.

Despite the numerous benefits, librarians may face challenges in implementing the 5IR in service provision and delivery, such challenges include but not limited to – lack of requisite skills, infrastructure and funding. Thus, emergence of the 5IR could significantly lead to loss of jobs, shortages of skills, digital inequality, privacy breaches, cybersecurity issues etc. For academic libraries to embrace present and future trends to accommodate library services, Apriliyant (2022) suggested that it is very necessary to update library curriculum regularly. Thus, Sajidan *et al* (2021) stressed that librarians must have 5IR abilities and competences to be trusted by institutions. However, the fifth Industrial Revolution presents weighty challenges in libraries as people adopt new work environment. In line with the above, Noah *et al* (2020) asserts that academic libraries struggle to support modern technology. Notwithstanding, Apriliyant (2022) also stated that, financial constraints could prevent the development and transformation of smart services and the purchasing of all the equipment needed for the 5IR. The author further listed – digital networking, inconsistent power supply, lack of skilled man power, outdated technology, economic issues and high costs of tools as challenges to adopting AI and other modern technologies in library operations. Studies by Gbaje, Yani and Odigie (2018) and Uchekwuka (2023) revealed that academic libraries in Nigeria are still faced

with challenges in the adoption and deployment of basic ICT infrastructure such as: Inadequate Infrastructure, insufficient funding and skills gap and training.

**Research Methodology**

The study employed survey research design. The population of the study is 65 librarians in Imo State University Owerri library and Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku library. Due to the small size of the population, it was also adopted as the sample for the study. A researcher-made questionnaire rated with four point Likert scale was used as instrument for data collection. In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, there was pilot-testing of the instrument. To achieve this, 30 copies of the instrument was administered on selected respondents

outside the area of study. Cronbach Alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded a coefficient index of 0.80. Copies of the instrument were administered and retrieved by the researchers with the help of tutored research assistants and a response rate of 100% was achieved. The data collected were organized in tabular form and analysed using simple mean (X) and Standard Deviation (Std). Analysis values were assigned to the four (4) response categories and the Mean (X) was interpreted in line with the 4- point scale as the highest to 1 the lowest. The decision rule - the lower limit of the high response category which was 2.50 was used as a cut-off. Thus, any item with a Mean (X) response of 2.50 and above was accepted as an influencing factor.

**Results**

**Research Question 1:** What are the information marketing strategies utilized by academic libraries to support the adoption of emerging technologies in the 5IR?

**Table 1:** Mean Response of information marketing strategies utilized by academic libraries to support adoption of emerging technologies in the 5IR.

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Std.	Remark
1	Creating online tutorial and guides	2.80	1.02	A
2	Hosting workshops and training sessions	3.01	1.07	A
3	Social media campaigns	2.90	1.05	A
4	Showcasing emerging technologies	3.05	1.09	A
5	Influencer partnerships	2.80	1.02	A
6	Content marketing	3.01	1.06	A
	Grand Mean	2.93	1.05	A

Data in table 1 above shows that all the items have mean scores above the cut-off of 2.50. This shows that all the respondents agreed that creating online tutorial and guides; hosting workshops and training session; social media campaigns; showcasing emerging technologies; influencer partnerships and content marketing will enable academic libraries utilize information marketing to promote digital literacy and support the adoption of

emerging technologies in the 5IR. This means that by leveraging information marketing strategies, academic libraries can promote digital literacy and support the adoption of emerging technologies and learning experience for students and faculty.

**Research Question 2:** What are the roles of information marketing strategies in enhancing the visibility and relevance of academic libraries in the 5IR?

**Table 2:** Mean Response of on roles information marketing strategies play in enhancing the visibility and relevance of academic libraries in the 5IR

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Std	Remark
1	Promoting library resources and services	2.84	1.03	A
2	Building a strong online presence	2.86	1.05	A
3	Showcasing success stories	3.02	1.07	A
4	Supporting emerging technologies	2.94	1.05	A
5	Fostering digital literacy	2.84	1.03	A
6	Collaborating with faculty and industry	2.92	1.05	A
Grand Mean		2.90	1.05	A

The analysis from Table 2 above shows that all the respondents agreed that by promoting library resources and services; building strong online presence; showcasing success stories; supporting emerging technologies; fostering digital literacy and collaborating with faculty and industry, information marketing can play a role in enhancing the visibility and relevance of academic libraries in the 5IR. This means that by leveraging information marketing

strategies, academic libraries can enhance their visibility and relevance thereby demonstrating their value to the academic community and supporting the institution's mission.

**Research Question 3:** What are the challenges faced by academic libraries in leveraging information marketing strategies to support the adoption of emerging technologies in the 5IR?

**Table 3:** Mean Response of challenges faced by academic libraries in leveraging information marketing strategies to support the adoption of emerging technologies in the 5IR.

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Std.	Remark
1	Financial constraints	3.06	1.09	A
2	Inconsistent power supply	2.91	1.05	A
3	Privacy breaches	2.69	0.95	A
4	Lack of requisite skills	2.81	1.02	A
5	Cyber security issues	3.06	1.09	A
6	High costs of tools	2.93	1.06	A
Grand Mean		2.91	1.04	A

The results in Table 3 shows that all respondents agreed to all six (6) items in the table as challenges faced by academic libraries in leveraging information marketing strategies to support the adoption of emerging technologies in the 5IR. Ranking highest are financial constraints and cyber security issues with 3.06 mean scores. This is followed by high cost of tools (2.93), inconsistent power supply (2.91), lack of requisite skills (2.81) and privacy breaches (2.69).

### Discussion

As shown in Table 1 above, the study revealed that all the respondents agreed that creating online tutorial and

guides; hosting workshops and training session; social media campaigns; showcasing emerging technologies; influencer partnerships and content marketing will enable academic libraries utilize information marketing to promote digital literacy and support the adoption of emerging technologies in the 5IR. This mean that by leveraging information marketing strategies, academic libraries can promote digital literacy and support the adoption of emerging technologies and learning experience for students and faculty. This finding is in line with Bala and Verma (2018) who opined that marketing in this era involves using digital technologies like the

internet, social media, search engines, and mobile devices to promote products or services and interact with potential consumers. However, the finding does not agree with that of Edewor *et al.* (2016) who discovered that there is low level use of social media such as Facebook, blogs, Twitter, e-mail alerts for marketing. Nonetheless, innovation and creativity should as a matter of fact be seen as a strategy to continuous and not short-term efforts in leveraging on information marketing to support 5IR.

The responses in Table 2 show that, all the respondents agreed that by promoting library resources and services; building strong online presence; showcasing success stories; supporting emerging technologies; fostering digital literacy and collaborating with faculty and industry, information marketing can play a role in enhancing the visibility and relevance of academic libraries in the 5IR. This means that by leveraging information marketing strategies, academic libraries can enhance their visibility and relevance – demonstrating their value to the academic community and supporting the institution’s mission. This is in consonance with Kutu and Olajide (2018), opined that, effective marketing provides means by which users are aware of the services of the library and their values. Furthermore, the finding agrees with Ubogu (2021) who asserted that, to contend with all competitors, libraries have to instigate different inventive products and services and employ different marketing tools to reach their patrons globally. Also, Garoufallou *et al* as cited in Uwandu and Okere (2022), opined that, marketing strategies are essential because it uses a range of tools and resources which aims to promote and make potential and current customers aware of the brand, services and products of an organization.

It was also revealed in Table 3 that respondents all agreed to all six (6) items in the table as challenges faced by academic libraries in leveraging information marketing strategies to support the adoption

of emerging technologies in the 5IR. This finding is in tandem with the assertion of Apriliyant (2022) that, financial constraints digital networking, inconsistent power supply, lack of skilled man power, outdated technology, economic issues and high costs of tools are challenges to adopting modern technologies in library operations. Also Gbaje, Yani and Odigie (2018) and Uchechukwuka (2023) whose studies revealed that academic libraries in Nigeria are still faced with challenges in the adoption and deployment of basic ICT infrastructure such as: Inadequate Infrastructure, insufficient funding, skills gap and training:

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Marketing is very vital libraries to make potential and current users aware of the resources and services of the library so as to increase use of the library as well as promote the image of library. The adoption of information marketing strategies that are digital can help to support academic libraries in the fifth industrial revolution.

Based on the finding of the study the following recommendations made:

1. Librarians should create a user friendly website and engage on social media to promote library resources and services;
2. Academic libraries should partner with faculty and students to develop library resources and services that support research and learning in emerging technologies; and also create maker spaces or innovation labs to showcase emerging technologies and provide hands on experience.
3. The management of academic institutions should increase library budget and also provide training opportunities for the library staff.

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