

EDITING SERVICES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN SUB-SAHARA AFRICA: ESSENTIALITIES AND MARKETING STRATEGIES

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Abstract *In recent times, academic libraries in developing nations are experiencing significant reductions in budget allocations due to budget cuts, inflation and recession. As a result, academic libraries quest for additional revenue-generating activities to raise funds beyond the limited government funding. This paper explores editing service as a possible means of revenue generation in academic libraries in Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, this research discloses the marketing strategies for promoting editing services in academic libraries. In conclusion, emphasis was laid on the need for academic libraries to set up editing service unit to supplement other revenue streams and to frequently display unique marketing strategies in advertising and promoting editing services of the library to enhance its benefits.*

Keywords: *Academic Libraries, Editing Services, Sub-Saharan Africa, Funding, Marketing, Marketing Strategies*

INTRODUCTION

Academic library is an integral part of higher education institution. The primary purpose of academic library is to support teaching, learning and research in ways consistent with, and supportive of the institution's mission and goals (Ogunjimi et al., 2018). Academic library aims to provide access to various print and online resources such as texts, reference materials, and scholarly research journals of various disciplines, research theses, newspapers and collections of special value needed to support the academic programmes of its parent institution. Academic library also renders services and guidance to its users, as well as a suitable space and a good working environment. To adequately provide these facilities, academic libraries must be well funded. Boadi (2006) noted that adequate funding should be seen as a fundamental necessity for the effective development of library and information services. In recent times, however, academic libraries are facing budgetary constraints due to the severe financial crisis in all sectors of the economy (Filson, Kodua-Ntim & Afful-Arthur, 2021). This is more pronounced in developing world especially in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Academic libraries in sub-Saharan Africa are in dire need of funds to meet up with unlimited needs of users. This is attributed to shrinking library budgets due to budgetary cuts, rising costs, inflation, and recession (Jain & Akakandelwa, 2016; Osunrinde & Obatikun, 2018; Aslam & Zia, 2019;

Mayombya et al., 2019). Furthermore, the global financial and economic crisis and the resulting cuts in public spending are additional challenges for academic libraries (Filson et al., 2021). As a result, academic institutions cannot fully fund their activities without a vibrant alternative revenue-generating venture (Paut, 2014). Consequently, researchers on academic librarianship clamour for internal income generation in academic libraries to raise additional funds beyond the limited government funding (Okojie, 2010; Mapulanga, 2011; Jain & Akakandelwa, 2016; Osunrinde & Obatikun, 2018; Aslam & Zia, 2019; Mayombya et al., 2019; Irenoa et al., 2019; Filson et al., 2021). Academic libraries should break away from complete dependence on government and institutional funding and employ consultancy and brokerages services to survive (Adu-Sarkodee et al., 2016). Fee-based services are very crucial for proper management of today's libraries. Therefore, academic libraries in sub-Saharan Africa need to provide unique revenue-generating services to support library management.

NEED FOR INTEGRATING EDITING SERVICES INTO ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

A number of cost-effective services can be integrated into an academic library including bindery services, reprographic services, advertising on library website, indexing services,

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document delivery services, training services, online reference services (Ibegwam & Ogunyade, 2008; Irenoa et al., 2019; Opara et al., 2019), notification of newly published research, editing services, and more. These services can create marketing opportunities that help promote the library's image as well as achieve its goals. Of the numerous services libraries can offer, editing is one of the most lucrative and cost-effective services.

Editing is an act of fine-tuning and improving the content of a manuscript. According to Aghadiuno and Oryila (2017), editing includes all activities performed to correct errors in a manuscript, such as reviewing and improving all aspects of grammar, language use, punctuation, spelling, diction, style, methodology, theory, characterization, organization, discussion, facts and general problems of craft intended to give the manuscript a presentable and publishable outlook. Many authors, writers, scholars, publishers and students have in recent times developed a keen interest in editing, either as a profession or as a guide to good writing. This is due to the significance of editing to writing and the entrepreneurial benefits of editing to authors, writers, scholars and other professionals. Good editing enhances effectiveness and clarity of ones writing. It ensures that researcher's manuscript is presented in the best way. Paudel (2019) ascertained that editing raises the overall academic standard of a piece of writing by critiquing, reviewing, adding, removing, rearranging and improving academic and intellectual work. It is, however, unfortunate that most academic libraries in Nigeria and Sub-Sahara Africa in general do not have a functional editing services unit to meet the needs of writers, scholars, or students who need advice and guidance on what they are writing. Some of the benefit of embedding editing service unit in academic library as highlighted by Aghadiuno (2018) are, provision of source of revenue from the editing consultancy of clients and students; provision of mentorship to students and other clients coming for mentorship purpose; imparting the values of self-employment in students, graduates and clients, primarily with the aim of embracing entrepreneurship education and improving the quality of manuscripts that will eventually enter the library.

Editing is an essential part of the writing process. Writing on the other hand is a major means of communication and communication on its own requires special skills. A good editor, therefore, should possess a solid communication skill to effectively convey the author's message. For this to be accomplished in the library setting, a professional academic librarian with English Language or related discipline as subject option is more suitable for delivering editing services in the library. This is because editors of manuscripts must be conversant with the basic rules of grammar in order to produce high quality, readable and professional content. Grammar is a fundamental aspect of writing that

helps writers effectively communicate their ideas and ensure clarity in their work. It is essential for editors, especially the non-native English speakers (or other official languages) to have a degree in English Language or related fields in order to acquire the solid foundation in grammar and the principle of effective communication. In the same vein, editing librarian should be acquainted with basic communication skill needed to efficiently manage the editing unit of the library.

Editing unit can be created as a separate unit of the library or merged with the project and research publication unit of the library. The project and research publication unit houses locally published materials of the parent institutions such as student projects, theses, dissertations, inaugural lectures, convocation proceedings, annual lectures, valedictory lectures, etc. The unit may be responsible for editing all locally published materials of their parent institution especially projects, theses and dissertation of students as well as the manuscripts of researchers. This would create a convenient room for the unit librarian to mandate editing of students' projects, theses and dissertation before approval would be made for submission. The existence of this unit in the library will attract researchers, writers, authors and other patrons who may wish to pay for this unique service of the library. This token can be used to supplement other sources of library revenue or fund other activities and programmes. It is, therefore, necessary to enhance the benefits that can be harnessed from editing service of library through marketing.

MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING EDITING SERVICES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARY

Marketing is an integral part of any organization, including libraries and information centres. It is an essential mechanism used in generating demand and interest among the users and potential users of the library to effectively utilize its resources and services. Jestin and Parameswari (2002) consider marketing to include activities such as identifying needs, designing suitable services or resources, and using effective pricing, communication and distribution to inform, motivate and serve the users. Marketing in the library context involves provision of library resources and services, using different tools and technologies to create awareness, attract library patrons and improve usage of library resources and services (Osinulu et al., 2018).

The aim of marketing is to inform users (both active and potential) about the variety of services the library has to offer (Kumar, 2020). Marketing connects the library users to library resources and services. Marketing of library products and services reduces barriers to resource utilization and involves planning to meet user needs. Marketing plays a very crucial role in creating awareness for library and

information products and services. It places the user at the centre of all library operations. Libraries must market their products and services to maintain their viability in the competitive environment of information dissemination and to establish strong relationships with the community. The level of services and resources provided to users by an academic library will largely determine the extent the institution's missions and goals are achieved. In view of this, marketing of library and information services has to be part of everyday work of librarians (Olorunfemi & Ipadeola, 2018). For libraries and information services to remain viable in the current environment, it is important that they adopt marketing strategies to help meet their mission and goals (Yi, 2016).

Marketing strategies are well-organized online or offline activities that move a business closer to its strategic goals. Marketing strategies include a thorough evaluation and review of market dynamics, demographics and competitive position of any organization. Marketing strategy has become a very important mechanism in the library and information environment. Information resources and services that are not effectively marketed may not be heavily patronized (Gupta & Savard, 2010).

A library may provide great products and services like editing services but without loyal customers or clients, its existence can be futile. Therefore, marketing and advertising strategies are important activities that for-profit and non-profit organizations must go with to make their products and services more acceptable to the audience. Advertising is a means of communication that conveys, presents and promotes ideas, goods or services created by communicators (companies, producers, librarians, information scientist) to communicants (public, especially audiences, consumers, clients) (Putri, 2021).

Libraries, especially academic libraries, should regularly demonstrate unconventional marketing strategies in advertising and promoting their services. Advertising and Promotion is about providing your customers or audience with as much necessary information as possible to convince them of the benefits of your products and services, and continuously stimulate their interest in your brand. Marketing strategy is crucial for the survival of libraries in this information explosion age. Marketing strategies for promoting library editing services to a target audience include:

- **Market Advertising Plan:** An advertising plan is the target demo of what one is planning to do. It is what an organization uses to map out marketing actions for optimal efficiency and maximum chance of success. A library editor's advertising plan may include channels used by its client (scholars, students and authors), e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook, email, website, zoom,

magazine, radio, face to face etc. An advertising plan defines the medium or venue for the launch or campaign, with details about the target audience, the number of advertisement and their cost. An advertising plan can outline the key messages each advertisement will convey and the techniques used to capture attention and communicate the message clearly. The plan will describe any responses or follow-up implementations, such as feedback slips or website addresses, so librarians can arrange to process the response. The plan should include a detailed budget, setting out all campaign costs and indicating where costs will fall. Campaigns are designed to achieve measurable goals. Therefore, the plan should indicate how you will measure the campaign.

- **Advertising Mission Statement:** The mission statement is the heart and soul of every organization. They provide information about the library's products and services and user outreach. A library editing services mission statement clearly defines the target audience; who they are and how the services will benefit them. Any mission statement without a clear benefit-oriented message is incomplete. This may mean the library patrons having only the knowledge of what services the library offers, but not why they should care. Editing service mission statement should always include what are supposed to be promoting.
- **Support Group or Team:** It is important to gather a support group that will team together to handle the challenges that may arise in the process, and any adjustments that may be needed. Successful advertisement for a product or service requires the cooperation of team members. For successful editing services to be realised in academic library, librarians need to jointly promote their editing services. Librarians may collaborate with students who have access to a large audience and can share information (especially online) to gain their conviction. Collaboration enables libraries to extend the reach of their advertising effort.
- **Working with influencers to promote the library's editing service is essential** because they have the power to influence the purchasing decisions of clientele due to their reputations and relationship with their followers. Moreover, when an influencer promotes a product or service he/she is endorsing your product or service to their thousands of followers. A few of these followers might view that content and potentially endorse it to thousands more. This is how good content goes viral.
- **Identify Your Target Audience:** Interacting with the right audience is crucial in any marketing programme. In creating advertising plan for editing services, librarians need to understand their target audience

and their specific needs and interests. This will enable them create an advertising content that stay relevant to the library. It is important to know in detail the demographics and information seeking behaviour of library patrons. Knowing demographic details like their education level, job title, relationship status, etc. allows you, as a librarian, fine-tune the tone of your content.

- *Create Enthusiasm:* Librarians must always keep in mind the interests of the library patrons. They should know that advertising is always about the interest of the audience. They should tackle their interests and talk about issues they would like to hear. When librarians know what motivates their patrons, they know a clear way to gain their trust. As an editing service unit librarian you need to know your audience's biggest motivations; what drives their interest. It is important to focus on the key benefits they might look for in the services, this can help in developing key messages that attracts their attention.
- *Special Programmes and Events:* Academic libraries can organise special programmes or activities like orientations, library tour, display, exhibitions, seminars, workshops and conferences for library users and new students to familiarise them with the various services provided by the library especially the new services. Editing librarians can through these mediums display or showcase what they have to offer. Library display and exhibition help draw attention to the products or services the library is promoting. They can boost current awareness in the library.
- *Creating a Website:* Generating a website is one of the least expensive ways to advertise and promote an organization's product or service. It gives a product global reach and can be extremely cost effective. A website creates a room for library users and non-users to learn more about the library, what the library has to offer, and how to contact the librarian for more information. It is a good advertising channel for library's editing services. The library website is often a library user's first point of contact, and it is an opportunity to make a remarkable first impression. A well-developed website will assure library users and non-users of the library long-term online presence.
- *Digital and Social Media Platforms:* Social media advertising involves using platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and TikTok to effectively reach a wider audience and communicate with library users and non-users. Social media is now commonly used by libraries in their promotion campaigns because social media can support user-generated content that can be distributed among the

participants to view, share, and improve (Agboke & Effiong, 2020). With social media platforms, editing service librarian can raise awareness and generate traffic of users. Through social media, users can communicate directly with editing librarians about some pressing issues. Libraries may advertise their special programmes that are geared towards promoting editing unit of the library and its services (like seminars, conference, exhibition and workshops) via social media.

- *Update the Impact of Your Products:* Product impact is the ability to identify product opportunities, influence product decisions, and innovate. It involves upgrading, repackaging and rebranding your products and services in a more attractive form that is more suitable and usable for the users. For instance, an editing service librarian can improve the quality of their service by using editing and proofreading software such as Grammarly, ProWritingAid, Hemingway App, Ginger Software, etc. These are powerful online proofreading tools that can help librarians edit patrons' writing for grammar errors. They review spellings, grammar, punctuations and delivery mistakes in English texts, detect plagiarism and suggest alternatives for the identified errors. These editing tools, if properly explored, can make contents more attractive and enhance user satisfaction.
- *Schedule Launch Date Which Could be Free or Subsidized:* A marketing launch is used to complete a specific marketing goal, such as raising awareness of a new product or service, increasing the interest in existing product or collecting feedback from library users. For editing services to grow rapidly, libraries need to create a sense of anticipation and excitement. It is necessary to give away to an exclusive group of lucky participants.

CONCLUSION

The budgetary allocation for academic library is unfortunately not sufficient to support teaching, learning and research in higher education institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa. As a result, libraries in developing countries give serious attention to issue of alternative income generation. Editing services can create marketing opportunities that can help advance library services as well as achieve library goals. Librarians in academic libraries in Sub-Saharan Africa need to integrate editing service unit in their libraries to supplement other sources of revenue. Further, embedding editing services unit in academic libraries will ease the quest of many library patrons who wish to write or publish their works (Aghadiuno, 2018).

Therefore, it is necessary for academic libraries to regularly showcase unique marketing strategies in advertising and promoting their editing service and other services to enhance the benefits that can be obtained from them. Marketing strategy is a business overall game plan for reaching prospective consumers and turning them into customers. The various marketing strategies for advertising and promoting library resources and services play significant role in improving library, performance as well as enhancing users' satisfaction.

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