

## FEE-BASED INFORMATION SERVICES AS PANACEA FOR EFFECTIVE LIBRARY MANAGEMENT

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### Abstract

This paper examines the conceptual nature of fee-based services, types of free based library services that can become fee based services, benefits of fee-based services to libraries, tips of library fee-based services, situation report about fee based information services in Nigerian libraries, strategies to enhance fee-based services in library and challenges of fee based information services to libraries .The paper concluded that the impact of limited funds and resources must be lessened, and librarians must devise strategies to maintain, enhance, and deliver top-notch services to users through fee-based services. It was recommended amongst others that Fee-based library services shouldn't be viewed as being solely for profit; rather, to partially recover costs with little or no profit motive, and in order to avoid losing customers, very modest fees should be charged for services provided in libraries.

**Keywords:** fee-base; information services; library management and effective library management.

### Introduction

There is no exception to the generalization that a library is an establishment that offers services for its patrons. A library is a treasure trove of information, and the knowledge it offers will never lose its value. In the modern, socially aware culture, a library of the twenty-first century is surely expected to be more responsive and involved with its patrons, particularly at a time when the concepts of the right to knowledge are gaining major appeal. Money and finances are increasingly a problem in Nigeria because of the vast array of information services that libraries offer. Because of

this, their current budget is inadequate to meet their needs, making the prospects for libraries in Nigeria gloomy. As a result, it is very possible that fee-based services would be seen as a feasible alternative to funding Nigerian libraries. The Nigerian library system might not offer many of these paid services. However, they continue to be crucial if our libraries are to survive. Public libraries might, for instance, boost their income and patronage by charging for services provided to distant and business clients who need quick information research and document delivery but are not part of the library's community.

When a service is described as "fee-based," it means that the client must pay in order to utilize it; it is not offered for free. Information services offered by libraries or information brokers in exchange for a fee are referred to as fee-based services. Fee-based services are those that libraries provide to specific user groups that may or may not be their major clients, such as research, book loans, and article delivery (Sulistyo-Basuki, 2014). Academic and public libraries in Nigeria offer a variety of fee-based services, such as registration fees, fines for lost or overdue books, and reprographic services. Internet browsing, cyber services, space sales for advertising and marketing, information repackaging, and consulting services sale of merchandise removed off shelves (Ilo, Idaerefama, Fufuri, 2016; Obodoeze, 2007). Fee-based services may enable libraries to offer services to both library users and non-users while also bringing in a useful amount of extra money that is reinvested in the library service to improve customer satisfaction. Fee-based services are acknowledged as a different source of income for libraries around the world.

In the context of libraries, it is the desire for monetary compensation for goods and services made available to users. In order to maintain their long-term survival, libraries are under pressure to

think creatively about fee-based, cost-recovery, and profit potentials (Ishola, 2014). According to proponents and analysts, the proper adoption of fee-based services will aid in balancing rising prices. Fee-based library services are offered as one of the options to boost library finances and manage the challenges given by technology advancements, as believed by Anyaoku (2012) as well. Libraries have long protected knowledge that is freely available to the public. A library's primary goal is to make information accessible to its potential patrons and supporters, as it is a 21st-century necessity.

It is now clear that the post-industrial era has arrived as modern civilization enters the twenty-first century, bringing with it the so-called new economy in which information not only serves as the cornerstone of the majority of industrial sectors but, more importantly, has evolved into a key tradable resource or commodity (Ward, Fong, and Camille, 2002). The information that library users desire or need can no longer be easily provided by libraries or librarians.

This essay's main points are: library services that could charge fees; the advantages of charging fees to libraries; and advice for charging fees for library services. Report on the current state of fee-based information services in Nigerian libraries, including enhancement methods and challenges that are thought to be associated with these services.

### **Library services that can become fee based services**

The library service that connects staff with users to deliver the right information at the right time, help users find resources, and provide vital information should be highlighted. Ilo, Idaerefama, and Fufuri (2016) provide a list of some services offered by libraries through which money can be made indirectly, including:

**Circulation Operation:** Lending out books and other materials is one of a library's key duties. According to Helen Geer, when a library implements a circulation system, it should be assessed on the basis of the cost associated with its structure and administrations, the enhancement of reader service, and the reduction of expensive records. Each library uses it and wants to please its users.

**Reference Service:** The definition of "proper contact" according to Ranganathan is "contact between the right reader and the right book at the right time and in the appropriate personal way,," According to him, the establishment of such a contact is "the only available and successful way" for achieving the goal of converting people into accustomed users. He designates that method as a reference service.

**Information Service:** The term "information service" has a broad definition that encompasses both the delivery of specific information on demand and the providing of information in advance. The real demand can be predicted and forecasted using a variety of techniques. Users can find information through a variety of methods, including bulletins, bibliographies, documentation lists, document distribution, annual reports, literature surveys, CAS, SDI, online searching, reports, etc. The main purpose of any library is to make information accessible. In the university library, it is crucial for researchers, academic staff, and students.

**Bibliographic Service:** The term "bibliography" today refers to a wide variety of texts, but it primarily describes information that has been logically organized to satisfy user needs. An Oxford English Dictionary definition of a bibliography is "a systematic description and history of books, including information on their authors, printers, publishers, editions, etc." Esdaile understood bibliography to be the art of keeping track of books as well as the science behind their creation and

current documentation. The common characteristic of these descriptions is that bibliographies identify books in an orderly fashion to make it clear where the information came from.

The scope of marshaling bibliographic records has increased thanks to the usage of information technology. A bibliography is subjected to a number of limitations in order to make it fit within a workable book. These restrictions do not apply to bibliographic records that are stored electronically. A database gives an infinite selection of books, however only a small number can be cited in a bibliography. Computers have helped in the development of bibliographic data by transferring it to electronic storage; these databases are known to cover millions of such records and are updated often.

**Abstracting Service:** The contemporary era, also known as the "age of information," has produced more information than any other period in human history. As a result, many sources are acknowledged, but this makes it difficult to decide whether information is accurate and important and to organize the information. An abstracting service strives to simplify the summarization of recent publications and instruct users on topics that interest them. The coverage and scope of the various abstract types can be used to distinguish them. The often used abstracts are indicators and teaching resources. There are numerous various sorts of abstracts, including author abstracts, locative abstracts, telegraphic abstracts, auto abstracts, and others.

**Indexing Services:** An index's quality and design have significantly improved in order to better meet the needs of users and, together, serve as a strong communication channel between the user and the information source. However, the use of an index has gained widespread acceptability as a result of the growth in the volume and complexity of published literature as well as the recognition that

information is crucial for research, socioeconomic development, and decision-making. A book's text or the contents of other gathered documentation resources can be organized using an index.

**Current Awareness Service:** It includes an alphabetical list of entries, headers that are sorted in another desired order or according to a list of entries, and references that show where each entry in the index is located. It follows that it is persuasively recognized that an index is a list that has been methodically ordered and has sufficient information about each item to permit its identification and retrieval.

**Selective Dissemination Services:** The term "Selective Dissemination of Information" (SDI) was first used by Hans Peter Luhn in 1959. a distinct service that was developed from the development of key term indexes. SDI serves specialized markets as a "Personalized CAS." A service that "channels new ideas or information from whatever source to those locations inside the company where the prospect of usefulness, in conjunction with present work of interest, is high" is referred to as SDI, in Luhn's words. How the SDI is implemented and how users' services manuals and computerized methods are used depend on the degree of automation of library services.

Additional library services that might transition to a fee-based model are listed as follows by Ilo, Idaerefama, and Fufuri (2016): Bibliographic services include abstracting, indexing, current awareness, selective dissemination of information (SDI), reprographic, translation, CD-ROM (Computer Disc-Read Only Memory), online, and many other types of services.

The following industries in Nigeria can boost library services and produce cash at the same time:

- Full internet access: Since many Nigerians still find it expensive to subscribe to an internet provider, they have full access to the internet. libraries might offer Internet access at a steep price. This would save money for those who currently struggle with the high cost of access in cybercafés.
- Seminars and training: Libraries can schedule periodic workshops and training sessions for specific demographics. Additional potential financing sources for libraries in Nigeria include:

- Membership fees.
- Delivery of electronic journals and documents: By using these services through the library, customers will have access to relevant information while also contributing financially to the university.
- Bindery services
- Bookstore establishments
- Digital Access: A library may charge a yearly fee for users to access the digital collections after digitizing its contents. Such a library ought to guarantee that the collection is regularly updated. For Nigerian libraries, digital repositories can bring in foreign income.

### **Benefits of Fee-based Services**

Despite different viewpoints on the merits and drawbacks of charging for library services, the library gains an important advantage from these fee-based services because of its inherent advantages. Ikenwe (2022) claims that the primary benefit of fee-based library services is that they are not profit-driven but rather service-oriented, which is why the library set reasonable fees. These advantages include:

- The value of the library's services and resources rises because patrons appreciate their purchases higher. Even the notion that the user will greatly benefit from the service is compatible with this.
- A stronger connection is made between the parent organization and the library management.
- It makes stationery more readily available in libraries.
- Information gathering becomes essential rather than just a fun trip to the library.

- Fee-based services increase the management and utilization of resources and services in an effective and efficient manner while decreasing misuse.
- Fee-based services expand opportunities for open access and availability while also enhancing access to printed and electronic materials.
- A fee-based service is a clever way to strengthen the financial position of libraries so they can provide greater services to their patrons. It lessens libraries' frequent financial disadvantage (Ikenwe, 2022)

Why By providing valuable and effective services to users that they otherwise would not have been able to, fee-based services boost the Library's opportunity to serve larger customers successfully (Ikenwe, 2022).

- Efficient management of the library.
- The more funding libraries have available, the better equipped they will be to upgrade their facilities and services (Anyaku, 2012).
- Fee-based services increase the likelihood that technical assistance and research will be given (Elvina, 2010).
- Making use of library resources effectively and efficiently, attending to user needs, maintaining and improving library infrastructure and coming up with original ideas (Nnadozie, 2013).

Why By limiting and avoiding waste, fee-based library services reduce the stress related to using library resources and services (Nnadozie, 2018).

### **Tips for Library Fee-Based Services**



Some helpful advice is needed for fee-based services. Planning, staffing, policy systems, marketing units, and finances are a few of the helpful hints mentioned by Ikenwe (2022). Other helpful hints include:

**Initial preparation:** According to Ikenwe (2022), planning in this context entails defining library fee-based services, establishing a comprehensive strategy to accomplish the goals, and integrating all human efforts and activities in order to provide successful fee-based services. Beginning with basic services that need less money, such as interlibrary loans, document delivery, and bindery services, might enable libraries with limited resources decide which services can be developed for a fee. Despite the potential harm to the library system, Rodin (2015) maintains that "library directors must not shirk from the idea of fee-based services."

**Information skills:** Regarding the problem of competition brought on by the existence of several information houses, librarians are endowed with information skill sets particular to the profession and incomparable in the numerous information companies. According to research findings, librarians continue to play a vital role in expert searching and their unique information handling skills are still essential for the delivery of information (Rodin, 2015).

**Adequate staff:** Ikenwe (2022) suggested that libraries should think about personnel and that the employees should have expertise and receive ongoing training when creating fee-based services.

**Adoption of fee-based model:** This case study contributes to the body of knowledge by providing a fee-based service model that offers a larger range of research services, including mediated literature searches, systematic review support, and research impact assessments. The flexibility of the service model allows for the negotiation of new services to meet the demands of researchers. Libraries

should change as new academic demands materialize. A fee-based service model could be used for specialized services that university libraries haven't historically provided. According to experiences at the Recent Library (Adanali), a clearly defined scope of fee-based versus core services and open communication with library staff and customers on the purpose and anticipated outcomes of a fee-based service model can assist fulfill the changing demands of library users based on observations made at the Recent Library (Adanali & Mete, 2019).

### **Situation report about fee based information services in Nigerian libraries**

In Nigeria, the concept of "fee-based service" is still quite young. The majority of visitors see libraries as places begging for business. Because of the aforementioned factor, Anyaoku (2012) thinks that the library is typically seen of as a social service facility where her target audience can access knowledge without paying for it. The author endorsed the fact that most libraries in Nigeria depend on subsidies from their parent universities and grants from enabling organizations to pay running costs and grow their collections.

If the library wants to enhance its internal revenue (IGR), the idea of fee-based services should also be broadened since Nigerian librarians are still largely unfamiliar with it. Luthfiyah (2016) claims that the Nigerian academic libraries' fee-based services have not advanced past user registration charges, fines for misplaced or late volumes, and photocopy charges. Ifidon (2005) made the case that even Nigeria's current fee-based library and information services are inadequately run in this regard. She continued by stating that fee-based services are offered by library staff just as regularly as other common services.

According to preliminary research, fee-based library services have been in Nigeria for a while, but only in a form that makes it difficult to properly understand their relevance. This appalling picture of fee-based services is not unique to Nigeria; it appears that other of its sister nations also have more than their fair share. In order to do this, Nnadozie (2018) claimed that Ghanaian academic libraries have not yet managed to strike a workable balance between the traditional notion of the public use ethos and the unavoidable need to pay for used services. He added that customers might have to pay for efficient service delivery to further develop the concept.

Similar to this, Luthfiyah (2016) found that the majority of traditional librarians believed that the price of library services was unimportant because they had traditionally been perceived as being free. By extension, he claimed that despite the library's lack of a profit-making goal, it will inevitably have to charge customers for its services owing to the cost of goods and services in today's world.

### **Challenges of fee- based information services to libraries**

The incapacity of library administration to clearly articulate plans for what services should be paid for, the basis on which such charges should be made, and the price laws greatly hinders the viability of fee-based services in libraries. The claim made by Komolafe-Opadeji and Yacob (as cited in Okeke, Urhiewhu, and Nwafor, 2015) that numerous university libraries, particularly those in Nigeria, are uncomfortable with pricing library services and are unable to comfortably strike a balance between the traditional library ethics of public use and the requirement that users pay for the services being provided to them is supported by this.

The vast majority of librarians and information experts remain skeptical of the morality of fee-based library services. The inability of the library administration to properly market and sell its services and products is another issue. Customers won't use a service or product until they are aware of it, according to Nnadozie (2013). Inadequate marketing skills and tactics have therefore been a significant issue in libraries because the majority of librarians do not understand the concept of library practices and perceive themselves to be service providers in a non-profit institution like the library. As a result, the necessary cordial relationship between the library and its users is shattered. Other challenges with fee-based services in libraries include a lack of funding, unsatisfied patrons, a librarian's lack of skills and competency, and user misconceptions (Ishola, 2014).

Ifidon (2005) found that the biggest obstacles to efficient marketing and fee-based library services are poor technology and insufficient resource allocation. However, suggestions centered on increasing user pleasure, which will unavoidably bring in additional clients. The global financial crisis is a direct cause of the inability of libraries of all types to sustain their services and even introduce new initiatives like e-current awareness services, e-SDI services, mobile phone services, and even common rover services in their libraries.

Despite the shrinking funding for libraries, Anyaoku (2009) noted that librarians have been reluctant to consider the economics of producing these funds through services. Some schools of thought worry that management will reject it, while others don't give a damn if it works. The researcher concurred that it was a smart idea to pay for library services. The impending changes in the information profession are becoming a major issue for libraries that provide fee-based services.

Without a question, the introduction of computers and the variety of information storage and retrieval applications they provide caused a fundamental shift in librarianship.

### **Strategies to enhancing fee based library services**

Fee-based service implementation is a rapidly growing trend in many developing nations, including Nigeria; yet, it needs a plan of action to be effective and efficient. The librarians will gain a better understanding of what it takes to begin a feasible study as a result (Okeke, Urhiewhu, & Nwafor, 2015). The library staff should be instructed on fee-based service models. Additionally, policies that outline the services to be charged for, their appropriate pricing, and the methodology for determining prices must be defined (Ishola, 2014).

A well-crafted action plan should have a goal and the steps to get there. It's also crucial to understand that marketing is all about informing people that the library provides particular services and goods (Nnadozie, 2013). This can involve making library users aware of some services they were previously ignorant of existed. Through marketing, users are made aware of the services the library offers, luring them to take advantage of them.

Maintaining transaction records is a tool for management to make wise judgments or guarantee that libraries have enough money. is an additional method for improving library services that charge fees. Additionally, poor pricing and planning are perennial problems (Anyaku, 2012). Fee-based services in libraries must therefore be carefully planned from the beginning. The automation of library tasks would thus significantly enhance the services that libraries provide and also result in the development of fee-based library services. The administration of libraries should be

able to clearly describe plans for what services are paid for, the justification for such charges, and the pricing guidelines.

### Recommendations

Based on the study's literature evaluation, the following recommendations are made regarding how to improve fee-based library services:

- i. Immediately establishing a policy and organizational framework for the management of fee-based library services in all of Nigeria's libraries. Once more, this will serve as a guide for utilizing the daily fee-based library services.
- ii. The initial financial support that the various authorities will give the library administration so they can begin providing fee-based library services.
- iii. To determine what is necessary to launch fee-based library services, how they will function, and how they will work with other experts, like accountants, to conduct cost analyses, identify actual costs, and develop pricing structures, a thorough feasibility study on these services should be carried out.
- iv. A retraining program on information marketing should be set up to stop library staff from misunderstanding free library services with fee-based library services. Entrepreneurial librarians will set up, staff, and run a department offering fee-based services. The training of the staff will cover business skills. A full orientation on how the fee-based library services operate, as well as what they stand to gain if implemented, should also be given to the library's patrons.

- v. It's important to remember that fee-based library services don't just exist to make money; they also aim to partially recoup expenditures, with little to no ulterior objective.
- vi. Very low prices should be levied for internet services offered in libraries in order to prevent users from switching to cybercafés.
- vii. vii. Information and communication technology equipment needs to be installed in order to encourage both potential and actual users to the library.

## Conclusion

To address the nation's needs in the areas of social services, education, health care, and research, the majority of libraries in Nigeria urgently need to modernize their collections and services. The effects of scarce funding and resources must be mitigated, and librarians must come up with plans to preserve, improve, and provide users with first-rate services. Offering fee-based services could be one way to achieve these objectives. The libraries of the future will be those that effectively communicate information by harnessing the changes brought about by the information age, it is imperative to keep in mind.

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