



## Market Diversification Strategy as a Correlate of Information Resources and Services Usage in Special Libraries in North-East Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

Special libraries, which cater to specific client groups, encounter considerable challenges, including low patronage and underutilization of their resources and services. This study aims to explore the relationship between market diversification strategies and the use of information resources and services in special libraries in North East Nigeria. The study was guided by two key objectives, and two hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 significance level. A correlational research design was employed, and data were gathered via structured questionnaires distributed to special librarians across six states in the region. The study population included all staff in North East Nigeria's special libraries, totaling 1,380 librarians across 231 libraries. Using a simple random sampling technique, a sample of 226 librarians from 18 libraries was selected. The researcher and 18 research assistants collected data directly, achieving a 100% response rate. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) was used to analyze research questions, while regression analysis was applied to test the hypotheses. The findings show a moderate positive correlation between market diversification strategy and the usage of information resources and services in the libraries studied. Specifically, as libraries diversify their services to address the varied needs of users, resource utilization rises correspondingly. This highlights the importance of special libraries adopting proactive marketing approaches to attract and retain users. The article concludes with recommendations for implementing innovative marketing strategies and regularly assessing user needs to enhance library service delivery. In doing so, special libraries can better fulfill their mission of providing essential information services and support to their communities.

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### INTRODUCTION

Libraries are pivotal institutions in the dissemination of knowledge and the support of research and educational activities within their communities. They serve as essential resources for individuals seeking information, education, and professional development. However, the landscape of library resources and services is

undergoing significant transformation, driven by technological advancements and shifting user expectations (Baker, 2020). Special libraries, which cater to the unique needs of specific client groups, face distinct challenges that can impede their effectiveness (Sullivan, 2019). The role of special libraries has become increasingly critical in the context of global information dynamics,

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especially in regions where access to specialized knowledge is essential for professional development and informed decision-making. Special libraries are designed to serve specific user groups, such as professionals in fields like healthcare, law, and academia, providing them with tailored information resources and services (Olorunfemi & Ipadeola, 2018).

Special libraries on the other hand are legal or law library, medical library, research institution library and banking firm libraries among others. Adomaa, (2021) stated that special libraries often have more specific clientele than libraries in traditional educational or public setting and deal with more specialized kinds of information. Special libraries are developed to support the mission of their sponsoring organization and their collections and services are more targeted and specific to the needs of their clientele. According to Nmecha and Wagwu (2020) special libraries are equipped to support their parent organizations by providing the information resources and services required to ensure their survival and continuous existence.

The information resources provided by the special libraries therefore, are vital tools for research and personal development of their targeted users whose are mostly staff and management of their parent organization. Nwosu and Opara (2019) define information resources as the raw materials that provide vital knowledge in the learning process. Special libraries however, ensures that the goals and objectives of their parent organizations are actualized by making sure that information resources are acquired processed and made available for their users and also make sure that they are well utilized. It is imperative to assert that the success of any library depends the utilization of its information resources available in print, non-print and electronic formats. Hence, Adomaa (2021) maintain that special libraries are developed to support the mission of their sponsoring organization and their information resources are more targeted and specific to the needs of their clientele and they may or may not be open to the general public. Libraries are essentially service institutions but at the same time, information resources usage as the core to

the business of library and information centers. 'Right information to the right user at the right time' is the basic motto of the library profession.

Library services on the other hand, are those services rendered by the libraries to its users which may vary from one library to another depending on the type and nature of the library. In special libraries, the provision of information services by the libraries to its targeted users is considered of utmost importance for the its survival. The special libraries provide library services to support the research, learning and personal development of members of their parent organization. Onwuekwe, (2022) stated that information services include, circulation/borrowing services, Reference service, Bibliographic verification services, Inter-Library Co-operation, indexing services, abstracting services, Cataloguing and Classification services, Creating databases and website design, etc. Library goes an extra mile to make these services attractive to user. The essence of rendering library services to library users is to create adequate access and increase utilization of information resources which is their utmost priority. Thus, providing quality information service means adjusting to user expectations consistently (Yuliana & Ifadah, 2022).

Library utilization has been defined as the act of perusing the library collection, requesting aid from library staff, locating the valuable information or information material, borrowing a book in the library, studying personal material in the library, as well as coming into the library or merely meeting with friends in the library (Atkin cited in Arua and Chikezie, 2006). Utilization of information resources and services in special libraries refers to the extent to which the available information resources and services are used by the targeted special users for the purpose of satisfying their information needs. It is, therefore, imperative for them to make maximum utilization of the available information resources to ease the performance of their duties as prescribed and assigned by their organization. It could, however, be assumed that lack of providing a current and relevant information resources could be a major militating factor in the utilization of

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information resources by the special libraries. In addition to that, Okpeke and Odunlade (2014) argued that the effective utilization of information resources is hinged on the awareness of the existence of a particular resource required to meet one's information need(s).

That suggests that special libraries, who are the custodians of these resources, have a lot to do in order to make available resources known to the users. Therefore, to bring these information resources and services to the attention of the users, there is need for the special libraries to adopt marketing strategies to promote their information resources and services. This aligns with the findings of Waral (2020) who emphasizes the importance of adapting marketing strategies to promote information resources and service.

Marketing as a basic and essential in the management process for promoting information resources and services. Marketing has been defined by many authors and scholars from different perspectives. Osinulu (2018) defined marketing strategy as a plan of action designed to achieve stated goals of promoting a library product or service to its users. Marketing strategy is a process that enables an organization like the library to focus its limited resources on the best opportunities to increase patronage and attain a sustainable advantage. The impact of library marketing strategies which is largely determined by the extent of utilization is dependent on the strategies adopted by library. Madu and Ajayi (2022) stated that the concept of marketing strategy focused on the clientele satisfaction as its primary goal. In other words, the essence of marketing as a management tool and process is to find out what the users' needs are and to set out strategies towards meeting those needs. In libraries, marketing strategy involves defining a target audience and planning specific strategies in order to value specific library resources and services. market diversification strategy has gained much attention after Igor Ansoff's 1957 introduction to conceptual model of Product-Market Growth Matrix. The theory explains of four types of growth potentials of a firm: Market Penetration, Product Development, Market Development and Diversification. This

approach aims to quantify internal information to match external operating environment of the firm.

The diversification as a market strategy is used by many profit sector businesses and evidences are found that the strategy has successfully applied to the non- profit sector too (Eckardt & Skaggs, 2018). Market diversification strategy as asserted by Su and Tsang (2015) is when organization aim at changing its business definition either by developing new products or expanding into a new market. Diversification in the business sector implies pursuing of growth by providing completely new products or services to new markets. Market diversification strategies present a viable solution to the challenges faced by special libraries. By expanding their range of services and targeting new user segments, libraries can enhance their visibility and engagement within the community (Mommoh & Egbunu, 2023).

Research indicates that effective marketing strategies can significantly boost the utilization of library resources and services (Owolabi, 2019). For instance, the introduction of outreach programs, partnerships with local organizations, and community engagement initiatives have been shown to foster increased patronage (Smith, 2022). In North-East Nigeria, special libraries are tasked with providing specialized information resources to diverse users, including government agencies, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations. Despite their critical role, many of these libraries struggle with low patronage and underutilization of their resources and services. A study by Abubakar (2021) highlights that a lack of awareness regarding the services offered by special libraries contributes to this issue, as does the perception that these libraries do not adequately meet user needs.

The low patronage of library resources and services by users are because they have not fully realized the potentials of the library in various endeavors (Emerole, 2017). It therefore becomes clear that for special libraries to perform its function adequately, its information services and resources must be effectively utilized. Therefore, libraries need to increases the users' patronage by

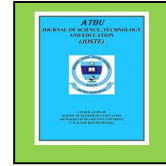
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providing the appropriate and relevant marketing strategies. Previous research has shown that market diversification strategies can enhance library service delivery and user engagement. However, there is a lack of empirical studies specifically addressing the relationship between market diversification strategy and utilization of information resources and services in special libraries within the context of North-East Nigeria. This gap in the literature raises critical questions about how these libraries can effectively implement diversification strategies to improve library resources and services utilization.

Therefore, this study underscores the pressing need for special libraries in North-East Nigeria to adopt innovative marketing strategies that align with user needs and preferences in order to maximize utilization in a complex information environment. By doing so, these libraries can not only improve their library usage but also reaffirm their position as indispensable resources for knowledge and information within their communities.

### Statement of the Problem

Despite the critical role that special libraries play in supporting education, research, and community development, many face low patronage and underutilization of their resources and services. This underutilization can be attributed to several factors, including a lack of awareness about available services, insufficient marketing strategies, and the perception that libraries do not adequately meet the diverse needs of their users

Moreover, the region's unique socio-economic challenges, including limited funding and infrastructural deficits, further exacerbate these issues, making it difficult for libraries to diversify their services effectively. As a result, many special libraries struggle to engage their target audiences and fulfill their potential as vital community resources.

Therefore, the primary problem this study seeks to address is the impact of market diversification strategy on utilization of information resources and services in special libraries in North-East Nigeria. This study aims to explore

field of study to providing insights that could inform future practices and policies in library management.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To Examine the Correlation between market diversification strategies and the utilization of information resources in special libraries in North East Nigeria.
2. To Examine the Correlation between market diversification strategies and the utilization of information services in special libraries in North East Nigeria.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Market diversification Strategy and Information Resources Usage

In today's dynamic and turbulent business environment, diversification has become a catalyst for achieving competitive advantages and the creation of synergy in market operations. Garusing (2020) define diversification as a marketing strategy utilized by firms to achieve growth of the business in terms of reaching new markets through developing or augmenting existing products and services or introducing new products or services. Because of that many of libraries seem to expand their resources and services potentials through adopting diversification market strategy. In today's dynamic and turbulent business environment, diversification has become a catalyst for achieving competitive advantages and the creation of synergy in market operations. This is because manufacturing companies operate in a highly competitive environment, especially among firms that produce the same or similar goods (Oladimeji & Udosen 2019). Therefore, getting experience from business sector organizations, libraries need to strategize their resources and service delivery and retain the users through diversification market strategy.

Diversification has become a popular survival strategy among libraries. Whether in related form or not, diversification is a strategic option used by many libraries to improve utilization of its resources and services. Special libraries have chosen from among several available

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strategic alternatives to market their library to reach predetermined goal regarding increased in utilization of its available resources and services. Understanding the relationship between market diversification strategies and the utilization of information resources is crucial for assessing library effectiveness. Research by Smith (2022) demonstrates a positive correlation between the implementation of diversified services and increased user engagement. Waral (2020) reinforces this view by stating that libraries that understand their users' demographics and preferences can tailor their services more effectively, thus enhancing resource utilization.

### **Market diversification Strategy and Information Services Usage**

Market diversification strategies are essential for special libraries to adapt to changing user needs and enhance information service delivery and utilization. Mommoh and Egbunu (2023) identify various strategies employed by libraries, such as outreach programs, community engagement initiatives, and the development of specialized services tailored to specific user groups. These strategies not only improve visibility but also foster a sense of ownership among users, which can lead to increased patronage (Sullivan, 2019). By actively engaging with the community, libraries can better align their services with user needs, thereby enhancing overall satisfaction and services utilization. Diversification can be implemented through innovation of directly related library services, indirectly related services and additional services probably not related to the typical library service but would be possible to provide by the library (out of the box).

Diversification has become relevant strategic used by managers to improve organizations performance. Diversification is when organisation aim at changing its business definition either by developing new products or expanding into a new market either individually or jointly. It is adopted to set off loses of one business with the profit of the other that may have got affected due to adverse market conditions. The success of this strategy varies not only across time but also among regions (Krivokapic, Nladimir

& Stogic, 2017). Zheng-Feng and Lingyan (2012) identified three definitions of diversification to include the following: (1) to give variety or to vary; (2) to extend business activities into disparate fields; and (3) to distribute investments in order to average the risk of loss.

Diversification strategy in the library implies pursuing of growth and expansion by providing completely new resources or services to new markets. Diversification is a kind of risk related strategy because if practices it, the library needs to acquire new knowledge, new resources, new management, new technology and needs to deal with unfamiliar markets. Other sector nonprofit organizations like media organizations, postal services, hospitals etc. are using product/service diversification strategy to retain their market share (Akingbola, Rogers & Baluch, 2019). Experiences from such services are much important for special libraries to prepare a strategy suitable to their libraries in other to maximize utilization of their library resources and services by their targeted users.

### **METHODS**

The design for this study was Correlation research design. A correlation design is appropriate for this study because the researcher collect data from a given sample of librarians to determine the relationship between marketing diversification strategy and information resources and services usage in special libraries in North East Nigeria. The area of the study was the 6 states of the North East Nigeria. Namely; Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe.

The target population for the study comprises all the 1380 librarians from 231 special libraries in the North east states. While a simple random sampling technique was used for these study, 18 libraries with the total number of 226 librarians was selected as the sample population for this study. Three special libraries were chosen from each state which are: High Court Library, State House of Assembly Library, and Federal Medical Center Library respectively. The selection of the libraries is based on their significance to the research. The instrument for data collection in this

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study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated by three experts; two from the Department of Library and Information Sciences and one from Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations all from Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka. The reliability of the questionnaires was established using the Cronbach alpha in conducting a pilot testing, on the spot method of data collection was used and data collected for this study was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data collected from the field for this study were analyzed and the summaries presented in tables to highlight the findings. The presentation was sequentially done starting with the answers to the research questions and then the testing of hypotheses.

**Research question 1:** What is the correlation between Market diversification and information resources usage in special libraries in North-East Region, Nigeria?

**Table 1:** Pearson r on the correlation between market diversification and information resources usage in special libraries. n = 226

Sources of variation	N	Market diversification r	Information resources r	Remark
Market diversification	226	1.00	0.45	Moderate positive correlation
Information resources	226	0.45	1.00	

Table 1 shows the correlation between market diversification and information resource usage. The table reported that a moderate positive correlation of 0.45 exists between market diversification and information resources usage in special libraries in North-East Region, Nigeria. Therefore, market diversification strategy is positively correlated with information resource usage. This means that as market diversification

strategy increases, information resource usage also increases and vice versa in special libraries in North-East region Nigeria.

**Research question 2:** What is the correlation between Market diversification and information services usage in special libraries in North-East Region, Nigeria?

**Table 2:** Pearson r on the correlation between market diversification and information services usage in special libraries. n = 226

Sources of variation	N	Market diversification r	Information services r	Remark
Market diversification	226	1.00	0.51	Moderate positive correlation
Information services	226	0.51	1.00	

Data presented in Table 2 reveals the correlation between market diversification and information service usage. The table reports that a moderate positive correlation of 0.51 exists between market diversification and information services usage in special libraries in North-East Region, Nigeria. Hence, market diversification strategy is moderately correlated with information

service usage. In other words, as market diversification strategy increases, information service usage increases and vice versa in special libraries in North-East region Nigeria.

## Hypothesis Testing

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant correlation between market diversification and information

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resources usage in special libraries in North-East Region, Nigeria.

**Table 3:** Regression analysis on the significant correlation between market diversification and information resources usage in special libraries. N = 226

N	Cal. r	Df	Cal. T	Alpha value	Pvalue	Remark
226	0.45	224	7.594	0.05	.000	S

S = Significant

Table 3 reports that at 0.05 level of significance and 264df, the calculated t 7.594 with Pvalue 0.000 which is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant correlation between market diversification and information resources usage in special libraries in North-East, region, Nigeria.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant correlation between market diversification and information services usage in special libraries in North-East Region, Nigeria.

**Table 4:** Regression analysis on the significant correlation between market diversification and information services usage in special libraries. N = 226

N	Cal. r	Df	Cal. T	Alpha value	Pvalue	Remark
226	0.51	224	8.801	0.05	.000	S

S = Significant

The results in Table 4 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 264df, the calculated t 8.801 with P-value 0.000 which is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant correlation between market diversification and information services usage in special libraries in North-East, Nigeria.

libraries in other to maximize utilization of their resources and services by the targeted users. In this circumstance, libraries can incorporate or link with their similar service providers like mega databases, smart search engines and other information service movements to provide services in co-operate basis as a diversification strategy.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The finding revealed that there is a positive relationship between market diversification strategy and information resources and services usage in special libraries in North East Nigeria. The findings however, is in line with the findings of Akingbola, Rogers and Baluch (2019) who maintained that diversification strategy in the library implies pursuing of growth and expansion by providing completely new resources and services in the library. Libraries need to acquire new knowledge, new resources, new management and new technology to be able to deal with the unfamiliar markets. Libraries are using product/service diversification strategy to retain their targeted goal. Experiences from such services are much important for special libraries to prepare a diversification strategy suitable to their

The result of the hypothesis shows that there is significant relationship between market diversification strategy and information resources and services usage in special libraries in North East Nigeria. This study rejected the null hypothesis which predicted that there was no significant relationship between the two variables. The finding supports that of Krivokapic, Nladimir and Stogic (2017), who discovered that market diversification has become relevant strategic used by managers to improve organizations performance. Market diversification in libraries has become relevant strategic used by librarians to improve library resources and services utilization. Diversification is when organization or institution aim at changing the definition of its aim and objectives, either by developing new resources and services or expanding into a new market

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either individually or jointly. The success of diversification strategy is provision of extensive promotional activities to targeted users in order to increase the library patronage.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study confirmed that there is a relationship between market diversification strategy and information resources and services usage in special libraries in North East Nigeria. This means that as market diversification strategy increases, information resource usage also increases and vice versa. Therefore, market diversification strategy maximizes usage of the information resources and services in special libraries in North East Nigeria. Diversification strategy eases the usage of the basic information resources and services provided by the libraries and it could also be generalized from the findings that the special libraries studied are trying their best in taking the maximum advantages of the strategy in order to achieve their stated objectives.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Special libraries should reach out to new markets through introducing a new library system, in order to do so the libraries need to acquire new knowledge, new resources, new management, new technology to deal with unfamiliar markets.
2. Special libraries need to strategize their resources and service delivery through the provision of directly library services, indirectly library services and additional services probably not related to the typical library service but would be possible to provide by the library.
3. Special libraries should create a persistent awareness among patrons and have the ability to anticipate the desires and requirements of actual and potential users and their fulfillments, tailoring the objectives of the library and the needs of their targeted users.

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