

MARKETING INFORMATION PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN THE LIBRARIES OF PUBLIC SECTOR UNIVERSITIES OF JAMSHORO

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to identify librarians' attitudes of the public sector universities of Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan, toward the marketing of library products and services. The data was collected through a self-constructed questionnaire based on literature review administered to all the professional library staff working in the public sector universities of Jamshoro. Results of this study indicated a positive attitude towards marketing information products and services. The respondents believed that an effective marketing programme depends on firm determination and team work. Most of the libraries of the public sector universities of Jamshoro were short of finances to be spent for marketing purposes. It was revealed by most of the respondents that information growth and budget deficit have made librarians to adopt marketing. The findings of the study showed that ICTs have made the marketing of library resources and services a necessity. Moreover, shrinking budgets of libraries, information explosion, and unfamiliarity of the users with library resources and services and resources constraints were the major factors responsible for marketing information products and services.

Keywords: Library Publicity, Librarians' Attitude, University Libraries, Library and Information Services, Marketing of Library Resources and Services, Information Products and Services.

INTRODUCTION

Information is considered a basic national resource. Every bit of information is as essential as minerals and other natural resources for the development of a country. Today, information is communicated through multifarious channels and the 21st century witnessed a phenomenon known as information explosion or information deluge. The dynamic growth of knowledge, growth in the number of users, diversified nature of users' requirements, escalating cost of documents etc. are major problems to librarians and information

managers to provide a need-based information service to their clientele. With the arrival of the internet technology, switching over from manual to automated and digitized techniques, new form of information searching and retrieval techniques have been created. Due to these developments, libraries all around the world are facing immense pressure to repackage their resources and to find out new ways to meet users' informational requirements and to make available the right information at the right time. The gravity of the problem is more complex unless proper marketing of information products is not carried on in libraries. Libraries all over the world have realized that marketing of their resources and services is a vital fragment of library organization and management. It can serve as a means for the promotion of library products and services among their users.

According to Gupta (2003) that with the introduction of new form of information resources such as CDs, microforms, databases, electronic journals and the information available on the internet, the concept of library services have also changed. It is now from basic to value added, from staff assisted to self- service, from in-house to outreach, from free to priced, from reactive to pro-active, and from mass customization to individualized service. Librarians and information managers must find new ways and techniques in order to satisfy their users. To serve this purpose, marketing seems to be more appropriate. There are few studies conducted in Pakistan on different aspects of library marketing. Most of these studies have focused on the discussion of the application of marketing to libraries and information centers.

However, a cursory examination of the literature on marketing reveals that not even a single study in Pakistan has been conducted so far to know the attitude of librarians towards marketing information products and services. The attitude of librarians and information professionals towards marketing their information resources and services is more important than its application, because if they have positive attitude towards marketing, they will be able to understand and implement it effectively. The present study will provide a basis for further research in this field. The major objective of this study is to identify attitudes of the librarians, the public sector universities of Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan, toward the marketing of library products and services. The study provides an insight into the psyche of librarians of the public sector universities of Jamshoro, and suggests ways to promote marketing of LIS.

WHAT IS MARKETING?

Today, marketing is a prominent feature of life. A number of people are related to the marketing profession. Many people think that marketing is a process of advertising or selling. In fact, it is much more than selling the product or services. It is an interaction and an exchange of value between two or more parties in which they “gain something”. Librarians and other library staff in actual are involved in the marketing practices in one way or the other, however, they may not realize their involvement in marketing activities in their daily library routines. They have to recognize that generating and adopting a strategy related to marketing is an instrumental instrument; they have to understand how to harness its power to benefit the corporate library and the enterprise as a whole (Brown, 1997).

Rowley (2006) defines marketing as a process of exchange with the help of which people or organizations receive benefits and values according to their understanding. According to Kotler (1999), marketing is a process in which one carefully analyzes, plans, implements and controls his formulated programs intended for bringing controlled exchanges of values with the target markets in order to achieve organizational objectives.

According to Kawatra (2000) that marketing of information comprises the activities directed at satisfying human information needs and wants through exchange processes; it considers the whole information product from the point of view of final results, i.e. from the used and users’ point of view. Kumar (2014) defines marketing as a process of the presentation of commercial accomplishments directing the movement of goods and services from manufacturer to clients. Spalding and Wang (2006) stated that marketing is an organizational task that describes the process for producing, collaborating and distributing value to consumers and for handling consume relationship in such a way that value the organization and its patrons.

MARKETING IN LIBRARIES

Libraries and information centers can hardly function today without adopting modern technologies such as ICTs for information dissemination. The dream of librarianship is to serve the information needs of users timely, efficiently and economically. Libraries all around the world have realized that demands and expectations of their information consumers are rapidly increasing at a rate with which any

library with limited resources can hardly cope with though conventional means. Therefore, it has become imperative on the part of libraries to revise their approach, mode of operation, retrieval and dissemination to users. The mission of libraries – providing excellent information services – has not changed, but technology has added several new dimensions to this task. Libraries have started to realize the importance of marketing their resources and services for providing excellent information services, refining and improving users' satisfaction and promoting their services to users.

Factors like greater demand of new kind of information products and services, less usage of library resources and services and the information revolution has greatly contributed towards the encouragement of marketing in libraries. The flow of financial resources is decreasing in real terms day by day. There is the escalating cost of information materials like books, etc. Then there is inflation, steady erosion of local currencies in the developing countries against hard currency since most of the information material comes from the developed countries, the impact of this is immense. These factors force information centers to acquire as less sources of information as possible. And on the other hand there is an information explosion which results into more and more of publications in micro-subjects areas. Libraries of higher education institutions spend huge amounts on the organization and management of their resources and services. To increase their utilization to the optimum level, libraries apply marketing principles. Madhusudhan (2008) argues that marketing information resources and services help libraries in the greater use their information resources, create need and demand perceptions, help to ensure optimum use of the information stuff, help to improve credibility of the library and its staff, help in tackling the problems of growing prices of books and other informational stuff, deal with the information explosion, balance shrinking budgets of libraries and maintain the dictum that “information is power”.

Marketing approach to the services and products of libraries is closely related to the basic principles of library and information science such as developing excellent collection of books and user-oriented services, while, appropriate management of library marketing could ensure continuing success in a few or all of the following: greater use of the library by library clientele; better decisions about what services and products to offer through the library; partnering with faculty members and administration;

preservation of the vital status of library in the institution, adequate funding and a better informed academic community (Opadeji and Haliso, 2012).

MARKETING OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Present day libraries are known as information markets and their users are consumers of information. Information is considered an important national resource. Every bit of information is essential as mineral and other natural resources for the development of a country. Today, information is communicated through multifarious channels and the 21st century witnessed a phenomenon known as information explosion or information deluge. The dynamic growth of knowledge, growth in the number of users, diversified nature of users' needs and escalating cost of documents are major problems to librarians and information managers to provide a need based information service to their customers. The gravity of the problem is more complex unless proper marketing practices are not carried out in libraries. Marketing is an essential approach in libraries for making the appropriate planning, designing and use of such services and resources for the better and optimum use of information (Jestin, 2012). It is a mean of serving the user in which every activity is carried out for users' satisfaction. It includes information priority of library users, expectations, individuality, responsiveness, relationship, quality of services, professional skills and competencies and value-added services. According to Kotler (1999), "every person who receives poor library services mentions it to at least seven other people".

Marketing of information resources and services help libraries in their administration and management brings commitment to customer focus; make known the benefits of the library services and listen to users' intellectual requirements; it helps in making users feel better, consequently they use library time and again which improves the library's image.

MARKETING AND USERS SATISFACTION

Gone are the days when the reader was considered a neglected component by the librarians. But today the situation has changed. Library is considered as a service institution which functions as an information center and librarianship a service oriented profession while user is recognized as an important component in the

information cycle. Present day libraries are more users oriented. User satisfaction is one of the most important things in libraries. The information requirements of readers have a wide range of variations depending on the type, standard, behavioral attitudes and economic background of the user. The user of a library or an information center therefore is not only educated in the art of information search but also informed through various marketing techniques about the existing library resources and services. It is the user around whom the whole library activities revolve. It is the duty of the librarian to provide right information to the right reader at a right time or as S. R. Ranganathan puts it “reader is a king for the librarian whose time must be saved”. Thus, it is important to identify the user groups and keep them abreast with their needed information through different marketing techniques.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the studies’ conducted so far on marketing have concentrated on the planning and application of marketing strategies and techniques in libraries (Smykla, 1999 and Butler, 1976). A cursory of examination of the available literature shows that only a few of the studies have been conducted on the attitude of librarians towards marketing information products and services. According to Grunenwald, Felicetti, and Stewart (1990) that a majority of the librarians hesitate to market their libraries’ information resources and services as this kind of activity seems unsuitable in libraries. Kaane (2006) argued that it is necessary to involve library staff in the provision of information services. The staff should also be supported to learn strategies related to marketing, giving due consideration to the perception of customers’ requirements and the capability to get response from the customers; technical know-how such as the proficiency to independently utilize the online technologies and understanding of different marketing tactics for promoting reference information skills.

Kaur and Rani (2007) carried out a research study on marketing in the university libraries of Punjab and Chandigarh, India. Based on a structured questionnaire administered to library users, the study reported that 61% of the study participants showed their willingness to pay a reasonable fee for their required services if proper marketing approaches were adopted. Majority of the respondents were of the opinion that libraries serve to up-date their users with the latest development through a number of information services. The study

recommended that price charged for developed library resources, services and products should be reasonable.

Kumar (2014) conducted a research study in order to examine the marketing practices of Kurukshetra University library. The population of this study consisted of 40 research scholars and 80 faculty members of various departments from whom the data was gathered through a questionnaire. The study revealed that the respondents were not well aware about the library's resources and services. A large majority of the study participants showed their willingness to pay if proper services are provided to them. They demanded publicity and marketing of information resources of the library in order to bring its rich resources in their notice. The study also revealed that library staff also lacked knowledge of marketing their information products and services. The study suggested that library staff should be made aware of the concepts and principles of marketing.

Khan (2012) conducted a study on marketing information products and services through social media and library professionals' attitude towards it. The study was based on the data collected from librarians and library science teachers of the Bahauddin Zakaria University Multan, Pakistan. The study found a positive attitude of the respondents towards marketing. The respondents agreed that information products should be marketed through Facebook, wikis, LinkedIn, blogs, You Tube and other tools and applications of social media. Major problems identified by the study were power failures (Load shedding), slow internet speed, privacy related problems, and lack of knowledge of the librarians about marketing.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The study is based on a survey questionnaire. The total population for this study comprises of approximately 100 library professionals. Questionnaire was administered to all the professional library staff of the public sector universities of Jamshoro who had master's degree in Library and Information Science. A total of 80 questionnaires were returned with a response rate of 79.20%. Simple frequency and percentage technique were used to analyze the data.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know the attitude of librarians working in the public sector universities of Jamshoro, Sindh, towards various aspects of marketing.

2. To examine the association between librarians' attitude and their individual and organizational characteristics.
3. To assess resources and services of the libraries of the public sector universities of Jamshoro in relation to marketing.
4. To know as to what extent the principles of marketing are being practiced in these libraries.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The Need of Marketing

**TABLE-1
NEED OF MARKETING**

S. No.	Statement	Number of respondents, agreement and (%)				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Librarians hesitate to adopt marketing	20 (25%)	10 (12.5%)	5 (6.25%)	20 (25%)	25 (31.2%)
2	Readers know about information products and services	9 (11.2%)	12 (15%)	7 (8.7%)	26 (32.5%)	26 (32.5%)
3	It is difficult to measure readers needs and requirements	12 (15%)	17 (21.2%)	9 (11.2%)	20 (25%)	22 (27.5%)
4	Planning marketing strategies helps to examine the value and utilization of library products and services	38 (47.5%)	35 (43.7%)	7 (8.7%)	00	00
5	Planning marketing strategy helps to defend the expenses incurred on library products and services	42 (52.5%)	38 (47.5%)	00	00	00
6	Information growth and budget deficit have made librarians to adopt marketing	70 (87.5%)	10 (12.5%)	00	00	00
7	ICTs have necessitated marketing	34 (42.5%)	22 (27.5%)	16 (20%)	8 (10%)	00
8	Internet is the most effective resource that helps to promote marketing library products and services	24 (30%)	30 (37.5%)	15 (18.7%)	11 (13.7%)	00

The results of the study revealed that librarians attitude towards marketing was encouraging. Table-1 shows that majority of the study

participants (56.2%) indicated that they do not hesitate to adopt marketing principles to library information products and services while 37.5% hesitate to adopt marketing principles to library information products and services.

26.2% of the respondents agreed that library users do not know about library's information products and services while 65 % readers know about the information products and services.

About 36.2% of the respondents indicated that it is difficult to measure readers' needs and requirements as against 52.5% of the respondents who replied in the negative.

According to 91% of the respondents, planning of marketing strategies is help to examine the value and utilization of library products and services.

As regards the justification of marketing costs, all of the respondents believed that planning marketing strategy helps to justify the expenses incurred on library products and services. These findings support the findings of Hart, Coleman and Yu (2008) whose study revealed that librarians' attitude towards application of marketing principles was encouraging. They wanted to adopt principles of marketing in order to make aware the users about their library's products and services.

When asked whether information growth and budget deficit have made librarians to adopt marketing, all of the respondents replied in the affirmative.

Similarly, 70% of the respondents were of the opinion that ICTs have made marketing information products and services a necessity, while 10% responded in negative.

Whereas 67% of the respondents were of the view that internet is the most effective resource that helps to promote marketing library products and services.

APPLICATION OF MARKETING INFORMATION PRODUCTS AND SERVICES PROGRAM

**TABLE-2
APPLICATION OF MARKETING INFORMATION
PRODUCTS AND SERVICES PROGRAM**

S. No.	Statement	Number of respondents and (%)				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Marketing should be a part of LIS curriculum	52 (65%)	28 (35%)	00	00	00
2	Conventional method towards marketing is for promotion only	59 (73.7%)	18 (22.5%)	3 (3.7%)	00	00
3	The term "customer" is suiting most for "library reader/user"	50 (62.5%)	25 (31.2%)	00	4 (5%)	1 (1.25%)
4	Marketing will overburden the duties of librarians and library routines	4 (5%)	10 (12.5%)	16 (20%)	18 (22.5%)	32 (40%)
5	Marketing is not suitable for librarianship	00	00	5 (6.2%)	28 (35%)	47 (58.7%)
6	Lack of marketing skills discourage librarians to employ marketing	42 (52.5%)	35 (43.7%)	3 (3.7%)	00	00
7	Marketing helps little in the utilization of information resources and services	1 (1.25%)	1 (1.25%)	3 (3.7%)	28 (35%)	47 (58.7%)
8	Marketing in libraries need sufficient human resources and finances	62 (77.5%)	15 (18.7%)	00	2 (2.5%)	1 (1.25%)

As shown in Table-2, all of the respondents indicated that marketing information products and services should be an integral part of the LIS Curriculum. These findings corroborates with the findings of Jain *et.al.*, (1999), Tenopir (2002), Adeloje (2003), Kavulya (2004), Bakar (2005), and Kaane (2006) whose studies indicated that marketing should be part of the library schools' curriculum which should aim at producing such library managers proficient in the present day knowledge economies.

An overwhelming majority of the respondents agreed that the conventional method towards marketing library resources and services is meant for the purpose of promotion only.

The survey participants were also requested to show their agreement level regarding the use of the term “customer” for library users. About 62% of the respondents strongly agreed that the term customer is suiting most for the library reader/user, 31.2% of the respondents agreed with the statement, while, only 6.25% of the respondents were not in favor of the term “library reader/user”.

When participants were asked to show their level of agreement on “if marketing of library products and services will overburden the duties of librarians and library routines”, a large majority (40%) were strongly disagreed, 22.5% were disagreed and 12.5% were agreed, while 5% a small proportion of respondents were strongly agreed with the statement.

About 58.7% strongly disagreed and 35% disagreed with the statement that marketing is not suitable for librarianship, reflects that librarians need training and support to chalk out and implement marketing programmes in their daily library routines. 52.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and 43.7% agreed that lack of marketing skills discourage librarians to employ marketing.

35% disagreed and 58.7% strongly disagreed with the statement that marketing helps little in the utilization of information resources and services.

A large majority (77.5%) strongly agreed and 18.7% agreed that “marketing in libraries need sufficient human resources and finances”.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS MARKETING**TABLE-3****ATTITUDE TOWARDS MARKETING**

S. No.	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Every library must have a mission statement	65 (81.2%)	15 (18.7%)	00	00	00
2	An effective marketing programme depends on firm determination and team work	68 (85%)	10 (12.5%)	2 (2.5%)	00	00
3	It is essential to rigorously assess the internal and external environment for decision making	60 (75%)	20 (25%)	00	00	00
4	Marketing library information products and services is as important as classification and cataloguing	55 (68.6%)	22 (27.5%)	3 (3.7%)	00	00
5	An experienced professional must be made responsible to take care of the marketing activities	48 (60%)	30 (37.5%)	2 (2.5%)	00	00
6	It is essential to continuously observe and measure the mission statement in the light of customers' feedback.	36 (45%)	32 (40%)	12 (15%)	00	00
7	Marketing program of the library must be able to anticipate any change in the information resources and services	30 (37.5%)	44 (55%)	6 (7.5%)	00	00
8	Customers' feedback is a must in order to examine the quality of information resources and services	71 (88.7%)	9 (11.2%)	00	00	00

Results of the study further revealed positive attitude of librarians towards marketing information products and services. As

indicated in Table- 3, all of the respondents agreed that every library must have a mission statement which should be adhered to and measured in the light of customers' feedback. This will certainly help the library to achieve its objectives effectively.

Most of the respondents strongly agreed that an effective marketing program depends on firm determination and team work.

Similarly, all of the respondents agreed that rigorous assessment of the internal and external environment is essential for effective decision making.

No negative attitude was observed against the statement "marketing library information products and services is as important as classification and cataloguing". This showed that librarians regarded marketing their library's information products and services equal to cataloguing and classification.

All of the respondents agreed that an experienced professional must be made in-charge of the library's marketing programme.

Whereas all the respondents agreed that it is essential to continuously observe and measure the mission statement in the light of customers' feedback.

A large majority of the librarians expected marketing programme of the library to be able to anticipate any change in the information resources and services.

Similarly, the entire study population agreed that customers' feedback is a must to examine the quality of information resources and services.

MARKETING PLANNING AND PRACTICES**TABLE-4
MARKETING PLANNING AND PRACTICES**

S. No.	Question Statement	Yes (Number of respondents and (%))	No (Number of respondents and (%))
1	Does your library allocate any specific budget to marketing information products and services	00	3 (100%)
2	Is there any specific person designated to supervise marketing program of your library	00	3 (100%)
3	Do your library charge any fee from the customers for information products and services	3(100%)	00
4	Do your library publishes any pamphlet/ brochure/bulletin about its activities	1 (33.3%)	2 (66.6%)
5	Do your library publishes its annual report	3 (100%)	00
6	Do you market your library products and services over the internet	3 (100%)	00

One of the questions in the questionnaire was regarding marketing planning and practices of libraries only the chief librarians were asked about their current marketing planning and practices. As is shown in Table-4, none of the libraries allocated any special budget to marketing their information products and services.

Similarly, no library has designated any specific person to supervise its marketing programme.

All of the libraries charged fee from the customers for their products and services.

The chief librarians were asked to indicate whether their respective libraries publish any brochure, pamphlet or bulletin about their activities. The results indicated that only one library, the Library of Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, Jamshoro publishes such brochures twice in the last 10 years, while rest of the two libraries do not publish any publication about their library activities.

All of the respondents mentioned that their libraries publish annual report.as well as market their library products and services over the internet.

It was revealed that MUET Library market library products and services over the internet on their library website, whereas, the library of the University of Sindh and LUMHS to some extent market their information products via library home page on university's website.

TABLE-5
MARKETING PLANNING AND PRACTICES

S. No.	Statement	MUET	UoS	LUMHS
1	Percentage of the total budget spent on marketing activities	Less than 1%	Less than 1%	Less than 1%
2	Decision making authority to spend budget on marketing activities	Chief Librarian	Chief Librarian	Head of institution
3	Fee charged from customers	Nominal	Nominal	Nominal
4	Marketing method of information products	Library homepage and demonstration	Library homepage	Library homepage

As is shown in Table-5, all of the libraries spend less than 1% of their total budget on marketing activities and charge a nominal fee from their customers.

The decision making authorities who spend budget on marketing activities for Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET) and University of Sindh (UoS) are the chief librarians, while the head of Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences (LUMHS) is vice chancellor who is the sole authority to make decisions on spending amount on marketing activities.

The method of marketing information products and services of the MUET is their library web sites and demonstrations, while the libraries of UoS and LUMHS inform their customers about their information products and services sometimes through their library home page on university website.

KEY FINDINGS

1. The findings of this study disclosed that library professionals have a positive attitude towards application of marketing principles to their library's information products and services.

2. A large majority of the respondents believed that an effective marketing program depends on firm determination and team work.
3. It was revealed by most of the librarians that information growth and budget deficit have made librarians to adopt marketing.
4. The findings of the study showed that ICTs have made the marketing of information resources and services a necessity. Moreover shrinking budgets of libraries, information explosion, unfamiliarity of the users with library resources and services and resources constraints were the major factors responsible for marketing information products and services.
5. Majority (67%) of the respondents were of the view that internet is the most effective resource that helps to promote marketing library products and services.
6. The librarians agreed that marketing of libraries' information products and services will put an extra burden on their daily library routines.
7. A majority of the librarians were of the view that libraries should designate a professionally qualified person to supervise marketing in libraries. However, results of this study indicated that none of the libraries have designated such a person.
8. Lack of knowledge, lack of financial support, insufficient staff and misconception about marketing were found to be the major factors hindering the application of marketing in libraries.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Modern libraries and information centers are considered as information markets where the customers are the consumers of information. In marketing, we carefully examine, plan, implement and regulate our formulated programmes designed to meet the requirements of customers. Marketing is a belief in service and trying to attain satisfaction of the customer. Marketing rests on the kind and excellence of products and services. For the universities libraries in Pakistan in general and Jamshoro in particular, marketing is essential to their benefits and their clientele. It is, therefore, need of the hour that the university authorities should provide necessary facilities and improve the current marketing infrastructure. Based on the findings, following recommendations are put forward in order to improve the marketing information services and products in the public sector universities of Jamshoro, Sindh:

- It is required from the top management of the library and university authorities of the of the public sector universities of Jamshoro to overcome the identified weakness.
- To provide state of the art library services, all the staff must know about the concepts and principles of modern marketing. It is therefore essential to provide them basic skill and training in the marketing of information products.
- The libraries of the public sector universities of Jamshoro should adopt modern marketing and promotional strategies such as publications, product displays, application of social media and the development of their library websites for the effective presentation of information products and services.
- A proper feedback mechanism should be developed in order to monitor the usefulness of the services and products.
- Surveys of customer/readers should be conducted on periodic basis to know their opinion about the continuity or dis-continuity of the existing products and services and initiation of new products/services.
- In the public sector universities in Jamshoro, necessary facilities and infrastructure must be put in place in order to use marketing to their benefits and that of their users. Human and material resources must be mobilized towards lifting marketing to greater heights.

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