The Contemporary Grade of Marketing of Library Products and Services in M. Kumarasamy College of Engineering: An Investigative Study

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Abstract - **Academic Libraries nowadays have to relate all its activities to public and its users very often and keep them updated with the changes and Updation in the Library. In order to attract the users and sustain in this modern ICT world, the user's complete satisfaction is the ultimatum. We are in a digital world where one need not physically go to the Library or a computer to get information they want. Just a swipe on their smart phone and they have their required information in their finger tips. They just require a device to login and an internet or Wi-Fi connection. That's it. This study is about the marketing of information products and services among users of M. Kumarasamy College of Engineering, Karur. From this research it is found that the marketing of services has been a great challenge with limited budget as well as the emerging ICT tools and technology day by day. The study shows the user behavior, their awareness level, usage, usefulness & the marketing strategies used in the College Library for promoting their services. This paper also suggests that Librarians have to be proactive in marketing their information sources & services with the help of current marketing strategies using ICT which is the need of the hour.**
Keywords: **Marketing, Library, Information Products, Information Services, Information Communication Technology**

I. INTRODUCTION

During 1960's the term Marketing Concept was confined only to manufacturing & industrial products rather in services industries. But, the scenario now has changed that without marketing there is nothing in this ICT world. However, dating back to 1930's itself Dr. S. R. Ranganathan has applied his idea of marketing through his five laws of library science.

1. Books are for Use
2. Every Book its Reader
3. Every Reader his Book
4. Save the time of the Reader
5. Library is a growing organism

A. Marketing - An Overview: Marketing plays a vital role in every aspect of today's modern intellectual world due to advancements in technology day by day especially in non-profit organizations or service industries. But, certain questions raised are below:
Do you really need to market library services?

If so, what would be the objectives and effect of marketing on the usage of library services to its users?
To answer the above questions, first let us explore what marketing is with some definitions.

"Marketing is the activity, set of instructions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large." (American Marketing Association [APA] 2010

Libraries are not the only provider of information to the users. Emergence of big book sellers both print and online has become a barrier between the libraries and its users. Marketing of Libraries also helps to maintain a good image of the libraries and the librarians to its users.

Libraries need to promote their resources and services, which in turn will gain more customer satisfaction leading to an upgrade in the image of the library. The main objective of marketing lies in satisfying the user needs and wants through careful planning, creative approaches and focused strategies. Marketing is an ongoing process connecting the library to its users. Librarians and information professionals need to match with what library has with users needs through research which is the key element in library marketing.

Library marketing research has experienced a shift from "selling the library" toward "meeting the needs of users". According to Weing and (1999) "marketing is an exchange relationship: a process providing mutual benefit to both parties in the transaction…"

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing is not the art of finding clever ways to dispose of what you make; it is the art of creating genuine customer value. Many Researches has been conducted since its inception dating back to 1980's. Sharma and Baradwaj (2009) in their research states that marketing approaches are proving to be effective in assisting academic libraries to adjust to changes in its client base and will ensure that services delivered continue to fit the needs. Mathews (2009) asks "While more and more students may be visiting the

library, the real question is, are they aware of everything we have to offer? Just because they are in our buildings doesn't necessarily mean that they are using library services effectively". Bushra (2012) in his study states that the majority of Libraries are not implementing marketing techniques, but it can be applied in libraries like in any other non-profit organizations.

Libraries should conduct timely orientation programmes, user's satisfaction surveys. Different mediums especially with the help of ICT tools Libraries can market their information products and services. Marketing of information products and services by the libraries has a lot to do towards entrenching marketing principles and practices says Jacob, O & Olajide (2018). Shapiro, K (1999) observed that marketing mix can be applied in marketing library and information services that four 'P's product, price, place and promotion. Raul, A, Belapurkar, S & Munnolli, S(2016) in their study concluded stating that Librarians needs to be proactive and take a lead in marketing and promoting library resources and services. The basic aim of marketing is to know and understand our user's needs in order to satisfy those needs in an effective way.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Helton & Esrock (1998) Complicated and Scary: This is how some students view academic libraries. This is the situation in many (almost all!) academic libraries especially in engineering colleges. Marketing in academic libraries is still a dark side which results in low patronage and under utilization of resources and services. It is also pragmatic that marketing of library and information sources and services are still not done as expected by the clientele. The study is significant and highlights the need for marketing in current academic environment. It also creates awareness about the various sources available for marketing especially through social media tools available in abundant. There are many researches that have been conducted in the field of academic like universities, schools, private colleges, but less focus was on engineering colleges. This study will fill the gap and serve as mechanism for an enhanced study in future by using the existing ICT tools that are largely available in the market.

A. Research Questions

1. What are the types of information products, sources, services that are available in M. Kumarasamy College of Engineering and its usefulness?
2. What are the types of current marketing tools used by M. Kumarasamy College of Engineering Library?

II. METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study is sample survey. The study covered the library of M. Kumarasamy College of Engineering, Karur, Tamil Nadu, India. The target sample for this study was the students and faculty members from M. Kumarasamy College of Engineering, Karur, Tamil Nadu, and India. As this was a pilot study of the extended research, only 30 well structured questionnaires were distributed among the students. 83% (25) of the questionnaire was responded completely and the remaining was rejected due to incomplete details and non receipt of the questionnaires. Data gathered are analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and variance.

III. DATA ANALYSIS

TABLE I PERSONAL INFORMATION

	Particulars	No. of Respondents (%)
Gender	Male	13(52)
	Female	12(48)
Status	UG	14(56)
	PG	5(20)
	Research Scholar	1(4)
	Faculty	5(20)

Based on the findings from this research, 52% (13) of the respondents are Male Students and 48% (12) are female students. 56% of the respondents belong to UG classes and 20% (5) of the respondents belong to PG classes 4% (1) of the respondent is a research scholar & 20% of the respondents are faculty members.

TABLE II LIBRARY SERVICES AND INFORMATION PRODUCTS

S. No.	Library Visits	No. of Respondents (%)
1.	Daily	3(12)
2.	Weekly Once	4(16)
3.	Weekly Twice	7(28)
4.	Weekly Thrice	1(4)
5.	Four Times in a Week	2(8)
6.	Five times in a Week	5(20)
7.	Occasionally	3(12)

From the above table we can see that majority of the users are visiting library at least weekly twice (28%). Users should still be insisted in visiting library daily as the statistics here shows only a 12% of the respondents of 25 are visiting daily.

TABLE III AVERAGE TIME SPENT IN THE LIBRARY ON A VISIT

S. No.	Average Time spent	No. of Respondents (%)
1.	Less than 30 Min.	14(56)
2.	Between 30 Min. & 1hour	7(28)
3.	Between 2 & 5 hours.	3(12)
4.	More than 5 hours	1(4)

From the table III it clearly shows that maximum number of respondents 14(56%) are using the library for more than 30 mins/day. Librarians still have to focus on getting more number of users using the library more effectively.

TABLE IV PURPOSE FOR WHICH YOU USE THE LIBRARY (PRIORITIZE FROM 1 TO 6)

S. No.	Purpose of Visit to Library	No. of Respondents (%)					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	To gain current awareness and to keep up-to-date	5(20)	8(32)	6(24)	1(4)	3(12)	2(8)
2.	To find specific information in your field of interest	3(12)	4(16)	5(20)	3(12)	5(20)	5(20)
3.	To read newspaper	10(40)	6(24)	2(8)	3(12)	3(12)	1(4)
4.	For academic Study/Research	2(8)	4(16)	6(24)	8(32)	2(8)	3(12)
5.	Study for competitive examinations	6(24)	10(40)	3(12)	1(4)	3(12)	2(8)
6.	To access electronic resources	7(28)	5(20)	3(12)	8(32)	1(4)	1(4)

The table IV shows that majority of the respondents (40%) visit library to read newspaper with a priority scale of 1, for academic research and (32%) study purposes on a priority scale of 4 and (32%) access electronic resources on priority scale of 4.

TABLE V REASON FOR NOT USING LIBRARY REGULARLY (TICK ONE OR MORE)

S. No.	Reasons for not using Library	No of Respondents (%)
1.	Location of the library is inconvenient to access	6(24)
2.	Working hours of the library is inconvenient	2(8)
3.	Library environment is not congenial for serious study	9(36)
4.	Library collection is inadequate	10(40)
5.	Library does not provide current/specialized information	15(60)
6.	Library staff members are not helpful	17(68)
7.	Get information from internet & other sources.	23(92)

From the table V it shows that 92% of the respondents have replied that most of the information is from internets and other sources. Libraries still exist with a more lot of information which has to orient to the students at the beginning of the academic year so that students will start using library.

TABLE VI AWARENESS AND ITS USEFULNESS OF THE AVAILABLE LIBRARY RESOURCES

S. No.	No. of Respondents (%)								
	Awareness (N=25) Grand Mean = 2.15			Usefulness (N=25) Grand Mean 3.76					
	Information Sources / Products	Aware of & Used	Aware of But not used	Not Aware	Most Useful	Useful	Least Useful	Not Useful	No Opinion
1.	Subject Books	19(76)	4(16)	2(8)	16(64)	3(12)	3(12)	2(8)	1(4)
2.	Reference Books	10(40)	10(40)	5(20)	8(32)	7(28)	8(32)	1(4)	2(8)
3.	Print Journals	8(32)	9(36)	8(32)	5(20)	3(12)	8(32)	4(16)	5(20)
4.	Back Volumes	3(12)	13(52)	9(36)	7(28)	5(20)	4(16)	520)	4(16)
5.	E-Journals	9(36)	9(36)	7(28)	12(48)	8(32)	1(4)	2(8)	2(8)
6.	Digital Collections	6(24)	16(64)	3(12)	6(24)	6(24)	7(28)	6(24)	3(12)
7.	Digital Library	15(60)	9(36)	1(4)	10(40)	6(24)	5(20)	3(12)	1(4)
8.	Newspapers	20(32)	5(20)	00	16(64)	4(16)	1(4)	1(4)	3(12)
9.	Magazines	18(12)	1(4)	6(24)	10(40)	8(32)	3(12)	2(8)	2(8)
10.	Projects	12(36)	4(16)	9(36)	6(24)	11(44)	3(12)	4(16)	1(4)
11.	Gift Books	5(20)	9(36)	11(44)	8(32)	14(56)	1(4)	1(4)	1()
12.	Question Bank	18(40)	4(16)	3(12)	16(64)	2(8)	4(16)	1(4)	3(12)
13.	Syllabus	3(32)	15(60)	7(28)	2(8)	15(60)	6(24)	1(4)	1(4)

The above table VI shows the responses in regards to the awareness of the library resources. Majority of the respondents (76%) are aware of the subject books followed by the Digital Library (60%), Question Bank (40%),

Projects (36%) & E-Journals (36%). The awareness level grand mean score is 2.15 which is been majorly disagreed and for its usefulness the grand mean is 3.76 has been majorly agreed.

TABLE VII AWARENESS AND ITS USEFULNESS OF THE AVAILABLE LIBRARY SERVICES

S. No.	Information Services	Awareness N=25 Grand Mean=1.97			Usefulness N= 25 Grand Mean=3.9				
		Aware of & Used	Aware of But not used	Not Aware	Most Useful	Useful	Least Useful	Not Useful	No Opinion
1.	Books Lending	23(92)	1(4)	1(4)	14(56)	3(12)	2(8)	5(20)	1(4)
2.	Web OPAC Services	17(68)	4(16)	4(16)	7(28)	9(36)	6(24)	1(4)	2(8)
3.	Reservation of Books	5(20)	11(44)	9(36)	12(48)	8(32)	3(12)	1(4)	1(4)
4.	Renewal of Books	16(64)	3(12)	6(24)	13(52)	5(20)	3(12)	2(8)	2(8)
5.	Interlibrary Loan	3(12)	8(32)	14(56)	14(56)	6(24)	3(12)	2(8)	1(4)
7.	Current Awareness Service	4(16)	8(32)	13(52)	15(60)	4(16)	3(12)	2(8)	1(4)
8.	Indexing Service	7(28)	8(32)	10(40)	14(56)	2(8)	5(20)	1(4)	3(12)
9.	Abstracting Service	3(12)	17(68)	5(20)	11(44)	4(16)	3(12)	3(12)	4(16)
10.	Bibliography Service	7(28)	9(36)	9(36)	8(32)	5(20)	6(24)	4(16)	2(8)
11.	Reprography Service	9(36)	9(36)	7(28)	4(16)	10(40)	6(24)	3(12)	2(8)
12.	Reference/Referral Service	6(24)	10(40)	9(36)	9(36)	10(40)	4(6)	1(4)	1(4)
13.	Document Delivery Service	5(20)	15(60)	5(20)	12(48)	4(16)	4(16)	4(16)	1(4)
14.	Literature Search	1(4)	9(36)	15(60)	17(68)	1(4)	2(8)	1(4)	4(16)
115.	E-Resources	10(40)	5(20)	10(40)	16(54)	4(16)	2(8)	2(8)	1(4)
16.	DELNET	7(28)	7(28)	11(44)	14(56)	5(20)	4(16)	1(4)	1(4)
17.	CD/DVD Service	8(32)	6(24)	11(44)	12(48)	7(28)	3(12)	1(4)	2(8)
18.	Internet Services	9(36)	7(28)	9(36)	10(40)	7(28)	4(16)	3(12)	1(4)

The above table VII is the findings of the awareness level of the usage of the services in the library. 92% of the respondents are aware of the Books Lending services, followed by Web OPAC Services (68%), Renewal of Books (64%) & Reprography Service (36%). The usefulness of the services was marked high for the literature search however respondents are not aware of the service in the library. The

mean score for the usefulness of the library services as provided by the respondents stands at 3.9, which is majorly agreed however when it comes to the awareness level of the services the grand mean is at 1.97 only which is been disagreed. Mamman S (2003) in his study observed that reference service if properly utilized can boost the image of the library and can promote research.

TABLE VIII MARKETING TOOLS USED

S. No.	Marketing Tools	Yes (%) Grand Mean = 0.57	No (%)
1.	Word of Mouth	20(80)	5(20)
2.	Circulars	23(92)	2(8)
3.	Telephone	24(96)	1(4)
4.	Emails	19(76)	6(24)
5.	One-One conversations	17(68)	8(32)
6.	Library Tours	9(36)	16(64)
7.	Exhibits/Display	7(28)	18(72)
8	Social Media	3(12)	22(88)
9.	Library Website	10(40)	15(60)
10.	Training Sessions	21(84)	4(16)
11.	Workshop/Seminars	4(16)	21(84)

The above table VIII shows the marketing tools used in M. Kumarasamy College of Engineering. Telephone conversations have been rated high with 24 responses (96%) followed Circulars (92%), Training Sessions (84%) & Word of Mouth (80%). The grand mean score for the marketing tools used in the library is 0.57 which is highly disagreed. This clear state that the marketing strategies used in the M. Kumarasamy College of Engineering is found to be negated as such that still traditional methods of marketing like, word of mouth, email alerts & circulars are still being used. Librarian has to take advantage of the modern ICT tools and make sure that marketing is done at the most effective way.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Generalizing the respondent's reply of the questionnaire distribute, the students and faculty members are aware of only the limited number of resources available in the library. We can also see that marketing strategies are not effectively used to showcase the available resources. There still appears to be a loath among the users despite their awareness of the resources and services in the library.

Based on the above research study the following point is recommended for effective marketing and usage of the available resources in M. Kumarasamy College of Engineering.

1. Display and Exhibitions: Book displays and exhibitions based on theme-wise and on different occasions can help boosting about the library resources to users. Library display racks also should so designed that it attracts the users and bay guides or signage should be clear and bold that could help in easy identification and retrieval of resources.

2. Library Orientation Programme: Every academic institution irrespective of whether primary or higher learning, Library orientation programme has to be conducted for the fresh students and faculty members on a department wise or class wise. Faculty members should be given orientation programme within a period of one week after their joining date. The core essence of this programme is to introduce the fresh students and faculty members to the world of knowledge resource centre. This can be done using different methods like, ppt's, audio visual tours, etc.

3. Workshop/Seminars: All students and faculty members irrespective of the Library orientation programme provided still need some special attention in regards to their awareness of the library resources and services. A 30 – 45 min workshops or training sessions every month/ or when a new resources is acquired or refresher training would help the users to easily recognize and aware of the resources and they can effectively start using the resources.

4. Social Media: People's needs are constantly changing and libraries need to have up-to-date information about the user's needs and expectations. Social media being and excellent way of communication helps n reaching broader audience. For library users today, emails or circulars won't work anymore. We have to reach them Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp etc. Social media engagement improves customer service, which allows responding quickly.

5. Library Staff: As there is another side to library marketing: an aspect that may be the most important. It is concerned with the selection, training and ongoing orientation of the library staff members whose direct or indirect contact with the library users translates the library's brand. Knowledgeable and friendly librarians can be one of the most powerful resources available in today's libraries. All gestures both verbal and non-verbal such as tone of voice, eye contact, appearance all are important in communicating to the library users.

Despite the above recommendations made, there are hindrances in adopting the marketing strategies. On the part of Librarians, ill marketing knowledge and skills, initiative, motivation, confidence and commitment play the major obstruction. On the part of top management, lack of financial, moral and knowledgeable staff members are the obstacles. LIS Marketing should be added as a subject in the Universities offering LIS course which is the need of the hour. Updated Library Website helps in promoting library activities, A mobile friendly website will do a great job in today's environment. Library Newsletters on the other hand is still considered as an marketing tool despite of many challenges. Frequency of Newsletters should be as such that all the major events, new arrivals, new resources subscribed should be circulated without any delay. A lack of knowledge among the faculty members is also one of the growing concerns especially in higher academic institutions. Good Communication and interaction between the faculty and library staff members will contribute to the strategic marketing as a tool.

To sum up, the awareness of the library resources are growing constantly. People are eager than ever for information and they know that in most cases libraries are the best source of high quality information. However, if people don't have access or not aware of the resources they will eventually turn to online resources. Library professionals need to gain new strategies and insights at the intersection of marketing, technology and management.

1. Practical Implications: This pilot study examined how current marketing strategies have an effect on the user experience. This study provided a deep insight as to if the materials or the sources for what the users are looking for is not available, users stop exploring for the other alternative sources. This is where as librarians we should integrate ICT tools like social media apps like Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn, etc., personalized library apps, AR, AI and more in recommending other sources and materials available to the users.

2. Limitations: Because of very small sample size, the results may lack broader view of the study.

3. Future Research: The future is a large scale study to survey the academic library users in other colleges in Karur, Kovai & Erode using revised questionnaire based on the results of this pilot study.

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