

Marketing of Academic Library Products and Services in the Digital Era

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Abstract :

Marketing the products and services in academic libraries is essential for the academicians amidst lockdown. Different marketing techniques increase the usages in libraries. In this pandemic situation marketing online will enable the users to get in touch with the library services. The main objectives of the study are analyzing the role of Social Media (SM), promoting the library services, knowing the effectiveness of the marketing strategies, evaluating the perception on marketing the library resources and defining the challenges faced by the librarians in promoting the library services. An online questionnaire was prepared in Google Form, the questionnaire was sent to 124 librarians of the Arts and Science Colleges of Kerala and colleges affiliated with Manonmaniam Sundaranar University. Out of 124 respondents, 96 of them filled the questionnaire legibly and were taken as samples. The results highlight that majority of the librarians use library websites as the most important platform to showcase their library services, 14% agree that SM helps the library professionals to create, converse, connect, to contribute and share information to other libraries, marketing



strategies like OPAC, library orientation, and user education were the most effective techniques to promote the library services. The librarians faced various challenges in marketing the library products and services such as lack of technical skill in operating the various SM tools, library budget, and raising the cost of the printed and E- documents. The study recommended that the library professionals need to update their digital skills and the libraries need to adopt more digital marketing strategies to provide immediate service to their users globally.

Keywords :

Academic Library, Digital Era, Disruptive Technology, Information and Communication Technology, Library Professionals, Marketing Skills, Marketing Strategies, Social Media tools

1. Introduction :

Disruptive Technology (DT) has influenced the academic libraries and changed the libraries into another computerized period, with the help of the (DT), Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and Internet; the clients can get to the information sources readily available. These advances give choices to make the method of access simple and utilize the academic libraries, assets, and administrations. The academic libraries need to move as indicated by the indications of the time and receive inventive promoting techniques that fit the scholarly libraries to deliver exciting and speedy services and fulfill the clients.

Libraries are considered as the store house of information and data, which all in all go about as the main thrust for the reformist improvement of the general public. Libraries are the information and data establishment of any country. A library gathers, sorts out and makes information assets available to a wide range of clients paying little mind to their ages, foundation, and interests (Islam, 2004) characterized the library as a learned foundation outfitted with fortunes of information, kept up coordinated and oversaw via prepared faculty to teach the kids, people consistently and aid their personal development through a compelling and brief spread of data.

Marketing is the way to acquire the objectives of any association and organization. The four components of promoting an idea are target market, fulfilling requirements



and needs, co-ordinate advertising, and hierarchical objectives. The cutting-edge method showcases the advanced method of advertising the results of any foundation. The cutting edge idea promotes social methodology that is client situated. The cutting-edge idea begins with the consumer's needs and wants. It makes the client the focal point of all business exercises. It laid accentuation on consumer loyalty. Online media like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter are also utilized for computerized advertising.

2. Literature review :

Strategic planning is one of the vital aspects of management to achieve the success for any new endeavour. Biswas, Nausheen and Chakrabarti (2011) discussed the various aspects of strategic panning which can be implemented in academic library to achieve the goal for any new programme. Bhardwa and Jain (2020) did a structured literature review on the marketing of library resources and services. This study evaluated the marketing of library resources and services and discussed the different means and ways for effective marketing. The study advocated the libraries to use the mobile services and the applications of Web2.0 for effective marketing and to satisfy the users. Bhatt, Kumar and Yusuf(2019) highlighted the importance of marketing the library products and services in the selected academic libraries in Delhi. Chandratre(2019) studied about marketing of Library and Information Services. This paper proposed that academic librarians can create the most optimistic stereotype by modifying library and information services with their flavour of the personal brand of long last relationship. Jacob and Olajide (2018) investigated the type of resources accessible in the libraries, about the marketing strategies and to propose instructions for upgrade the library services. The results reported that the libraries occasionally marketed their resources, conducted user education. They concluded that the libraries need to update their OPAC regularly because it is the best way to market the library products and services. Hajam (2018) also discussed the importance and need of marketing the library resources and services, the functions of marketing practices in obtaining the libraries plans and objectives productively in the prerequisites of the users in the Allamalqbl library. The study concluded with a recommendation that the librarians should use latest digital marketing strategies.



3. Statement of the problems :

The studied literature made an attempt to bring out the problems of the marketing library products and services legibly. They further proposed effective strategies for the librarians to update the modern technologies in order to promoting library services. However these literatures did not point out the root cause of the problem. The field of library service has many problems such as executing the digital techniques in promoting the resources in the library. It is painful to state that majority of the librarians miserably fail to update the modern technologies. It is identified that they are not impregnated with modern technologies to serve the users. Thus, the younger generation also following the same age old strategies. Hence the researcher is motivated to fill this gap by undertaking a research on marketing of academic library products and services in the digital era. The result of the study will benefit the users to access the improved services from libraries as the result of the recommendations of this study. Hence, the study has been entitled as "Marketing of Academic Library Products and Services in the digital Era"

4. Objectives :

1. To examine the importance of Social Media tools in promoting the library services
2. To know the effectiveness of the marketing strategies in the academic libraries
3. To evaluate the perception on marketing the library resources and services
4. To define the challenges faced by the librarians in promoting the library services

5. Scope of the study :

The present study is to examine the marketing of academic library products and services. Hence, the scope of the present study is limited to libraries of Arts and Science Colleges of Kerala and affiliated colleges of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tamilnadu in the digital environment. Further, evaluating the perception of marketing may help to identify the best marketing strategies for academic libraries attached with Arts and Science Colleges.

6. Methodology :

An online questionnaire was prepared in Google form and send to 129 library

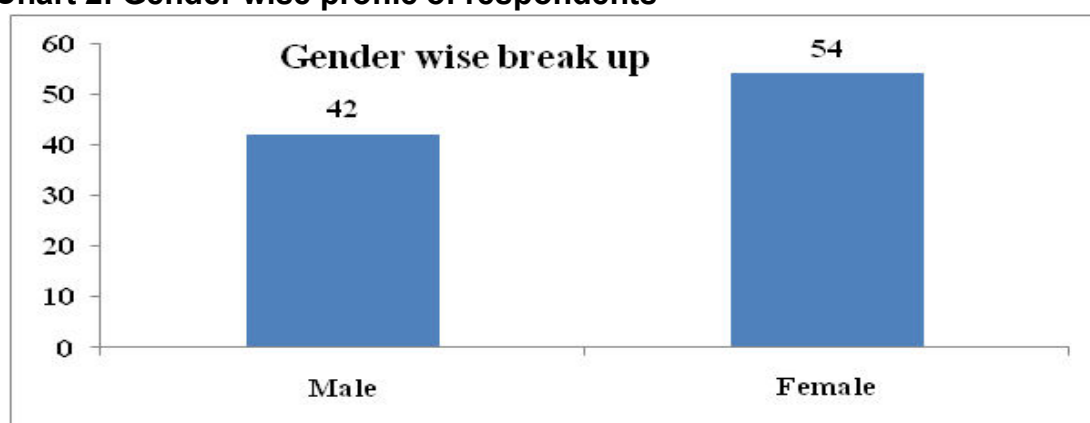


professionals of the Arts and Science Colleges of both the Universities. The library professionals were selected randomly. Out of 129 librarians, 96 of them responded properly and their responses were taken as the primary data for the study. The primary data collected were coded, analyzed, classified, and tabulated by Excel. The statistical tool used for the study is MS Excel. Out of 96 respondents, there were 42 male and 54 female.

7. Analysis and interpretation :

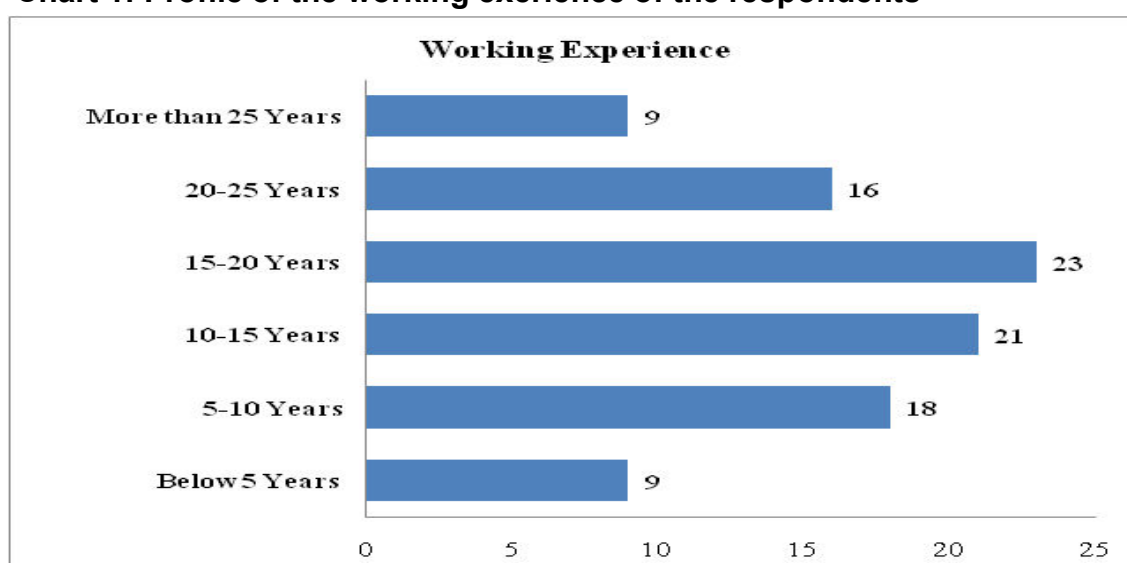
The derived data has been analysed in search of result to support the stated objectives of this study.

Chart 2: Gender wise profile of respondents



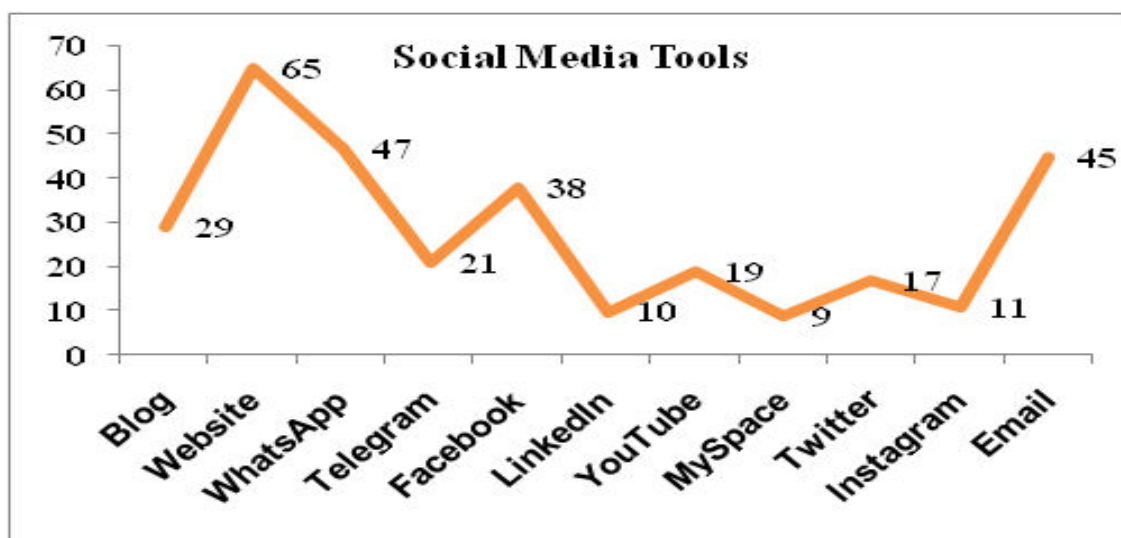
The chart 1 reveals the gender-wise break-up of the respondents. It is found that out of the total respondents, 43.75% were male and 56.25% were female.

Chart 1: Profile of the working experience of the respondents



The chart 2 depicts the profile of the working experiences of the respondents. It is observed that out of total respondents 9.38% have below five years of experience, 18.75 % of the respondents have 5-10 year of experience, 21.88% have 10-15 years of experience, 23.96% have 15-20 years of experience, 16.67% respondents have 20-25 years of experience and only 9.38% have more than 25 years of experience.

Chart 3 : Social media tools



The line chart represents the various SM tools used by the librarians to promote the library services. It is identified that out of 96 respondents only 29(30.21%) of them used the blog to display the services, followed by 65(67.71%) Website, 47(48.96%) Telegram, 38(39.58%) Facebook, 10(10.42%) LinkedIn, 19(19.79%) YouTube, 9(9.376%) MySpace, 17(17.71%) Twitter, 11(11.46%) Instagram 45(46.88%) used Email to promote the library services.

Table 1: Importance of social media tools in promoting the library services

Sl. No	Importance of SM tools	Very Imp.	Imp.	Moderately Imp.	Slightly Imp.	Not Imp.	Total
1	SM tools enable library users to find the resources	82 (85.42%)	9 (9.38%)	5 (5.21%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	96 (100%)



2	SM tools are essential to market library services	69 (71.88%)	24 (25%)	3 (3.13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	96 (100%)
3	SM tools help in knowledge sharing	56 (58.33%)	22 (22.92%)	16 (16.67%)	2 (2.08%)	0 (0%)	96 (100%)
4	SM tools enable the librarians to get closer to the users	63 (65.63%)	15 (15.63%)	9 (9.38%)	6 (6.25%)	3 (3.13%)	96 (100%)
5	SM tools facilitate students, faculty and researchers to use library and its resources	76 (79.17%)	11 (11.46%)	8 (8.33%)	1 (1.04%)	0 (0%)	96 (100%)
6	SM tools are essential in the process of exchanging knowledge and information	42 43.75%	25 26.04%	13 13.54%	9 9.38%	7 7.29%	96 (100%)
7	SM tools help the library professionals to create, converse, connect, to contribute and share information to other libraries	39 (40.63%)	14 (14.58%)	19 (19.79%)	11 (11.46%)	13 (13.54%)	96 (100%)
8	SM tools are essential to feed user with information about new arrivals and events of the library	69 (71.88%)	11 (11.46%)	6 (6.25%)	8 (8.33%)	2 (2.08%)	96 100%

(Imp. = Important, SM = Social Media)

The table 1 shows the importance of SM tools in promoting the library services. Majority of the respondents 85.42% agree that SM tools help to find library resources for the users. 9.38% states it is important. 5.21% states it can be used moderately. But none of them has negative opinion on SM tools. 13.54% openly reveal that it is



not important. 71.88% agree that SM tools help to feed users with information about new arrivals and events of the library and 2.08% state it is not important.

Table 2: Effectiveness of marketing strategies in the libraries

Sl. No	Effectiveness of marketing strategies	Extremely effective	Very effective	Effective	Somewhat effective	Not effective	Total
1	Word to Mouth	69 (71.87%)	12 (12.5%)	6 (6.25%)	9 (9.37%)	0 (0%)	96 (100%)
2	Library Orientation	86 (89.58%)	5 (5.21%)	4 (4.17%)	1 (1.04%)	0 (0%)	96 (100%)
3	User education	76 (79.17%)	13 (13.54%)	5 (5.21%)	2 (2.08%)	0 (0%)	96 (100%)
4	Library Tours	56 (58.33%)	19 (19.79%)	11 (11.46%)	6 (6.25%)	4 (4.17%)	96 (100%)
5	Exhibition of the new arrivals in the library	72 (75%)	2 (2.08%)	11 (11.46%)	9 (9.38%)	2 (2.08%)	96 (100%)
6	Bulletin board services	54 (56.25%)	12 (12.5%)	13 (13.54%)	11 (11.46%)	6 (6.25%)	96 (100%)
7	OPAC	91 (94.79%)	5 (5.21%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	96 (100%)
8	News Letters	53 (55.21%)	9 (9.38%)	15 (15.63%)	14 (14.58%)	5 (5.21%)	96 (100%)
9	Posters in the library notice board	46 (47.92%)	23 (23.96%)	19 (19.79%)	5 (5.21%)	3 (3.13%)	96 (100%)
10	Brochures	49 (51.04%)	21 (21.88%)	9 (9.38%)	8 (8.33%)	9 (9.38%)	96 (100%)



11	Library Club	52 (54.17%)	19 (19.79%)	11 (11.46%)	9 (9.38%)	5 (5.21%)	96 (100%)
12	Conducting Book Fairs	49 (51.04%)	12 (12.5%)	17 (17.71%)	11 (11.46%)	7 (7.29%)	96 (100%)
13	User Statistics	35 (36.46%)	41 (42.71%)	9 (9.38%)	5 (5.21%)	6 (6.25%)	96 (100%)
14	Notice Board	53 (55.21%)	17 (17.71%)	15 (15.63%)	9 (9.38%)	2 (2.08%)	96 (100%)

The table 2 shows the effectiveness of the marketing strategies in the libraries 69(71.87%) of the respondents agreed that word to mouth is an extremely effective marketing strategy and no one has the opinion that this strategy is not effective for marketing the library products and services. The majority of the respondents (89.58%) opined that library orientation is an extremely effective marketing strategy. On the other hand no one has the opinion that this strategy is not effective. The majority of the respondents 91(94.79%) said that OPAC is an extremely effective marketing strategy and none of them have the opinion on effective, somewhat, and not effective. 53(55.21%) of them agreed that the notice board is an extremely effective marketing strategy and 2(2.08%) have the opinion that not effective for marketing the products and services in the academic library.

Table 3 : Perception on marketing the library resources and services

Perception on marketing the library resources and services	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Marketing leads the use of resources and services at maximum	81 (84.38%)	11 (11.46%)	4 (4.17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	96 (100%)
Marketing of library service poses additional work load	14 (14.58%)	9 (9.38%)	45 (46.88%)	15 (15.63%)	13 (13.54%)	96 (100%)



Marketing of library resources and services help to fulfil user expectations	56 (58.33%)	12 (12.5%)	17 (17.71%)	6 (6.25%)	5 (5.21%)	96 (100%)
Adopting innovative marketing strategies require planning and investment in ICT	48 (50%)	12 (12.5%)	16 (16.67%)	14 (14.58%)	6 (6.25%)	96 (100%)
Marketing leads the library services from the library to the end users of the academic library	26 (27.08%)	13 (13.54%)	40 (41.67%)	8 (8.33%)	9 (9.38%)	96 (100%)
Additional manpower and materials are required	13 (13.54%)	15 (15.63%)	23 (23.96%)	31 (32.29%)	14 (14.58%)	96 (100%)

The table 3 displays the perception of marketing the library resources and services. The perception of marketing is tested with the help of a 5-point scale. 84.38% of the respondents strongly agree that marketing leads to make use of resources and services. 15.63% of them agree. 23.96% of them express neutral statements. 32.29% of them disagree and 14.58% of them strongly disagree.

Table 4: Challenges faced by the librarians in promoting the library services

Sl. No	Challenges	Yes	%	No	%
1	Insufficiency in library budget	64	66.67	32	33.33
2	Change in user's mode of satisfaction	56	58.33	40	41.67
3	New updates	61	63.54	35	36.46



6	Widely available information services	43	44.79	53	55.21
7	Increase in the cost of documents	49	51.04	47	48.96
8	Rising up new services and technologies	58	60.42	38	39.58

The table 4 display the challenges faced by the librarians in promoting the library services. 66.67% respondents express the insufficiency in library budget. 33.33% of them make partial statements. 60.42% of them are ready to accept developments in new services and technologies and 39.58% of them are not.

8. Findings of the study :

1. Out of total respondents, there are 43.75% male and 56.25% female.
2. 23 respondents have 10 25 years of experience as library professionals.
3. Only 9 of the respondents have experiences below 5 years
4. Library website is the most used SM tool and Myspace was the least used tool in promoting the resources.
5. Majority of respondents agree that word to mouth is an effective way of marketing the library resources.
6. No one express that word to mouth is not an effective method to market.
7. Most of the respondents state that library orientation, library website and OPAC are the current techniques which are used in many libraries to market the services.
8. 15(15.63%) of them send personal letters to users through text messages and email.
9. Majority of the respondents have a good relationship with their staff and users.
10. 32(40.63%)libraries have Institutional Repository.
11. Majority of the respondents 81(84.38%) strongly agree the fieldof marketing leads to the use of resources and services at maximum.
12. 26(27.08%) agree that marketing leads the library services from the library



to the end-users of the academic library.

13. 85.42% of the respondents agree that marketing enables library users in locating library resources.
14. No one has the negative remarks in locating library resources.
15. Majority of the respondents strongly agree that Social networking sites are essential to market library services.
16. Most of the respondents state that there is a lack of library budget.
17. 51.04% agree that there is an increase of rates with regard to the documents

9. Conclusion :

The study highlights that the library professionals of the Arts and Science Colleges of Kerala and affiliated colleges of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University have excellent experiences in their profession. They use different marketing strategies to showcase the library services. Web OPAC is doing a commendable service to take the field of library to the next level. They too face various challenges in marketing the academic library products and services. Once the library is properly positioned, with specific marketing strategies for each target group, the college libraries can market their information products and services efficiently and effectively.

10. Suggestions :

- The libraries can have a proper access to Social Networking Sites such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp.
- The library professionals must show interest to use the latest strategies to make visible the library services.
- Adequate knowledge about different computer applications should be compulsory.
- The librarians can concentrate on creative innovations.

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