

SYNOPSIS

1. INTRODUCTION

Recognition of information as a key resource for the economic, socio-cultural and political development of a nation is gaining increasing acceptance around the world. With the newfound prominence, information is elevated to the position of a tradable commodity just like the conventional goods and services, resulting the emergence of a new market called information market. The unlimited freedom and potential offered by the free market economy is attracting the attention of the private investors to the information market as never before.

Till recently libraries enjoyed unquestionable monopoly as information handling agencies. But as a consequence of the radical changes that have taken place in the last decade due to information revolution, globalisation, marketisation and privatisation librarians and information managers of today are facing some serious problems in the management of libraries which they have faced never before.

The conventional approach to the management of the libraries can no longer be effective in the rapidly changing information environment. Librarians and information managers, therefore, need to redefine the philosophy of library management and have to incorporate modern management techniques to strive and thrive in the highly competitive and strategically important information market. Application of marketing techniques to the management of libraries and information centres is a positive step in this direction.

The present study is expected to identify the degree of Marketing Orientation in information dissemination activities of the university libraries in Kerala. The marketing orientation of the university libraries is assessed from different angles, namely, institutions, category, gender, subject and time spent for retrieving required information. It may provide an opportunity for the respective

management to get a first hand knowledge of how their users perceive and judge their marketing activities.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 To find out the level of Marketing Orientation of the university libraries in Kerala.

2.2 To compare the variability of the level of Marketing Orientation of the university libraries in Kerala.

2.3 To assess the user perceptions regarding the Marketing Orientation of the university libraries according to their Membership Category, Gender, Department / Subject background and Time Spent by them in the library.

2.4 To assess the contributions of various components of the Marketing Orientation of the university libraries in Kerala.

2.5 To identify the weaker areas in the Marketing Orientation of the university libraries in Kerala

2.6 To suggest remedial measures for improving the Marketing Orientation of the university libraries.

3. HYPOTHESES

3.1 The university libraries in Kerala are Marketing Oriented.

3.2 The level of Marketing Orientation of the university libraries in Kerala differs from university to university.

3.3 Users differ significantly in their perceptions regarding the Marketing Orientation of the university libraries in Kerala.

3.4 The contributions of all components to the Marketing Orientation are significant.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Sample Used

All the individual and institutional members of the university libraries in Kerala form the population of the study. For sampling purpose the users were grouped in to four namely, Teachers, Research Scholars, Students and Other Members. The sample for the study was taken from all the seven university libraries functioning in Kerala. The final sample of the study consists of 813 members of the university libraries functioning in Kerala (Kerala University Library – 131, Mahatma Gandhi University Library – 132, Cochin University Library – 134, Sree Sankaracharya University Library - 135, Kerala Agricultural University Library – 50, CH Mohammad Koya University Library, University of Calicut – 135, Kannur University Central Library – 96).

4.2 Variables

4.2.1 Study Variables

4.2.1.1 Intelligence Generation

4.2.1.2 Response Design and Implementation

4.2.1.3 Communication and Co-ordination

4.2.1.4 Human Resource

4.2.1.5 Complaint / Redressal

4.2.1.6 Management Attitude

4.2.1.7 Evaluation

4.2.1.8 Infrastructure and Supporting Facilities

4.2.2 Classificatory Variables

4.2.2.1 Name of the University Library,

4.2.2.2 Membership Category,

4.2.2.3 Gender,

4.2.2.4 Time Spent in the Library and

4.2.2.5 Department / Subject Background of the User.

4.3 Tool Used for Data Collection

Questionnaire on the user perceptions of Marketing Orientation.

4.4 Statistical Techniques Used for Analysis

4.4.1 Arithmetic Mean

4.4.2 Standard Deviation

4.4.3 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

4.4.4 Scheffe test

4.4.5 Factor Analysis

5. MAJOR FINDINGS

5.1 Moderate level of Marketing Orientation exists in the university libraries in Kerala. University wise difference in Marketing Orientation is significant. The highest Marketing Orientation Score is recorded against Cochin University Library. C.H. Mohammed Koya Library, University of Calicut has the lowest Marketing Orientation among the university libraries. The variation in the Marketing Orientation Score is the highest in the case of Cochin University

Library when compared to that of the other university libraries (Scheffe Test, Table 51).

5.2 Variation in the Marketing Orientation of the university libraries base on the Category of Membership is not significant.

5.3 Gender wise difference in Marketing Orientation of the university libraries is significant. Female users feel the Marketing Orientation more than their Male counterparts.

5.4 Difference in Marketing Orientation according to the Time Spent by the users is significant. Users spending 1 – 3 hours in the library are more aware of the marketing activities of the university libraries than the other groups. The recognition for the marketing activities is least among those spending less than One hour in respective university libraries. The variation in the Marketing Orientation Score is highest in the case of users spending more than 7 hours in the libraries.

5.5 Department / Subject wise variation in Marketing Orientation is significant. Users included in the Commerce and Management category are more convinced of the marketing activities of the university libraries than the other groups. Least appreciation for the marketing activities is shown against the users of the Social Science strata. Significant difference regarding the Marketing Orientation of university libraries exists only between the users who belong to Commerce and Management and Social Science categories.

5.6 In the overall university library scenario, the components namely, Intelligence Generation, Communication and Coordination, Complaint / Redressal, Human Resource, Management Attitude, Evaluation and Infrastructure and Supporting Facilities are contributing significantly to the Marketing Orientation Score. The contribution of the component Response Design and Implementation is not significant. In the ranking, the component Communication and Coordination is

ranked as the first principal component and the lowest ranked component is Response Design and Implementation.

5.7 In the case of Kerala University Library, only two components namely, Human Resource and Communication and Coordination have contributed significantly to the Marketing Orientation. Here the first and last ranked components are Human resource and Infrastructure and Supporting Facilities respectively.

5.8 In the case of Mahatma Gandhi University Library six components are contributing significantly to the Marketing Orientation. They are Evaluation, Management Attitude, Communication and Coordination, Human Resource, Complaint / Redressal, and Response Design and Implementation. . The highest and lowest contributions have come from Evaluation and Intelligence Generation respectively.

5.9 Contributions of six components to the Marketing Orientation are found significant in the case of Cochin University Library. They are Communication and Coordination, Complaint / Redressal, Intelligence Generation, Human Resource, Evaluation, Infrastructure and Supporting Facilities. Contribution wise Communication and Coordination is ranked as the first principal component and the lowest rank is assigned to Response Design and Implementation.

5.10 Out of the eight Components used for the study purpose, six are contributing significantly to the Marketing Orientation of Sree Sankaracharya University Library. The contributions of the components namely, Evaluation, Intelligence Generation, Infrastructure and Supporting Facilities, Communication and Coordination, Response Design and Implementation and Human Resource are found significant. Here, Evaluation is ranked first

component and the lowest rank goes to Management Attitude according to their contribution to the Marketing Orientation.

5.11 Contributions of seven components to the Marketing Orientation of Kerala Agricultural University Library are found significant. They are Communication and Coordination, Complaint / Redressal, Evaluation, Management Attitude, Intelligence Generation, Response Design and Implementation and Human Resource. In the ranking of components according to their contribution to the Marketing Orientation, Communication and Coordination is identified as the first principal component and the eighth position goes to the Infrastructure and Supporting Facilities available in the university library.

5.12 In the case of C.H. Mohammed Koya Library, University Calicut, seven components are found significant according to their contribution to the Marketing Orientation. They are Management Attitude, Communication and Coordination, Intelligence Generation, Evaluation, Complaint / Redressal, Human Resource and Infrastructure and Supporting Facilities. Here the Management Attitude is ranked as the first principal component and the lowest rank is assigned to the marketing function Response Design and Implementation.

5.13 Contributions of seven components are found significant in their contribution to the Marketing Orientation of Kannur University Central Library. They are Intelligence Generation, Evaluation, Communication and Coordination, Management Attitude, Complaint / Redressal, Human Resource and Infrastructure and Supporting Facilities. According to the contributions of the components, Intelligence Generation is ranked first and eighth position is shown against Response Design and Implementation.

6. TENABILITY OF HYPOTHESES

The tenability of hypotheses based on the result of statistical analysis is discussed below.

The first hypothesis states that ‘the University Libraries in Kerala are Marketing Oriented’. The grading of Marketing Orientation Scores indicates the existence of a moderate degree of Marketing Orientation in the information dissemination activities of the University Libraries in Kerala. Thus the hypothesis is fully substantiated.

The second hypothesis states that ‘the level of Marketing Orientation of the University Libraries in Kerala differ from university to university’. The p-value clearly indicates the significant difference in the Marketing Orientation of the University Libraries in Kerala. Thus the third hypothesis is fully substantiated.

The third hypothesis states that ‘the users differ significantly in their perceptions regarding the Marketing Orientation of the university libraries in Kerala’. The respective p-values indicates that Gender wise, Time Spent wise and Department / Subject wise the perceptions of the users regarding the Marketing Orientation of the university libraries in Kerala varies significantly. But the variation in user perceptions regarding the Marketing Orientation of the university libraries in Kerala is not significant according to their Category of Membership. Hence the hypothesis is almost fully substantiated.

The fourth hypothesis states that ‘the contributions of all components to the Marketing Orientation are significant’. The respective factor loadings of components in the overall university scenario indicates that all the eight components except Response Design and Implementation are contributing significantly to the Marketing Orientation. Hence the hypothesis is almost fully substantiated.

7. IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The analysis reveals that the university libraries in Kerala have a moderate degree of Marketing Orientation in the information dissemination activities. It shows that the management of the university libraries in Kerala has given reasonable degree of importance to the user needs and requirements while offering their services.

Among the university libraries only Cochin University Library and Mahatma Gandhi University Libraries have high degree of Marketing Orientation. The Marketing Orientation differs from university library to university library. The Marketing Orientation is found moderate in the case of Kerala University Library, C H Mohammed Koya Library, University of Calicut, Sree Sankarachrya University Library, Kerala Agricultural University Library and Kannur University Central Library. The management of these libraries may try to address the weaker links in their marketing management so that they can improve their Marketing Orientation and performance.

The Marketing Orientation is comparatively low in the case of Kerala University Library and C H Mohammed Koya Library, University of Calicut. This may be due to the fact that they are the oldest and largest university libraries in Kerala serving comparatively larger number of users than the other university libraries. Satisfying the information requirements of large group is always a difficult task for any management.

Female users are feeling the Marketing Orientation of the university libraries more than the Male users. The difference in their perception regarding the Marketing Orientation of the university libraries is commendable. Hence the library management may design their marketing policies and programmes keeping in mind the needs and requirements of the Male users than the Female users.

Time Spent wise, the users spending less than one hour and more than seven hours in the university libraries during a week have extended least appreciation for the marketing activities of the university libraries. The Time Spent wise difference in the Marketing Orientation is significant. This calls for the attention of the library management to concentrate on these groups to improve their marketing performance.

Users belonging to Commerce and Management category feel that the university libraries in Kerala have high degree of Marketing Orientation. The Marketing Orientation of the university libraries is moderate according the users belonging to Social Science, Humanities, Language and Literature, Science and Technology, and Other Subject Categories. Department / Subject wise also the difference in the Marketing Orientation is relevant. Hence the university library management may give immediate attention to users belonging to these groups to improve their Marketing Orientation.

The study has identified eight components constituting the Marketing Orientation of the university libraries. The contribution of these components varies form university to university. Response Design and Implementation is the weaker link in the marketing management of the university libraries in the over all scenario.

The components namely Evaluation, Management Attitude, Complaint / Redressal, Response Design and Implementation, Intelligence Generation and Infrastructure and Supporting Facilities are the delicate areas in the marketing management of the Kerala University Library. Thus the library management may give top priority to these functions in their effort to improve their Marketing Orientation.

The contributions of Intelligence Generation and Infrastructure and Supporting Facilities to Marketing Orientation are not crucial in the case of

Mahatma Gandhi University Library. Hence the library management may take immediate steps to address the weaker areas under these heads.

Management Attitude and Response Design and Implementation are the areas demanding immediate improvement in the case of Cochin University Library, as their contributions to the Marketing Orientation are not commendable.

Complaint / Redressal and Management Attitude are the two areas suggested for the improvement in the case of Sree Sanakaracharya University Library.

Kerala Agricultural University Library has to improve their Infrastructure and Supporting Facilities to make the library services more Marketing Oriented.

In order to improve the marketing performance, C H Mohammad Koya Library, University Calicut may assign high priority to the activities related to Response Design and Implementation.

Response Design and Implementation is the weaker link in the marketing management of Kannur University Central Library. Hence the library management may take all the possible steps to improve the performance this marketing function at the earliest.

To make the marketing activities more efficient and effective it is desirable for the university libraries in Kerala to create a separate marketing section consisting of library professionals, marketing specialists, system analysts and psychologists. If the library does not have enough resources to appoint these specialists their consultancy may be sought in important decision-making.
