Investigating the Application of Marketing Mix in South Australian Public Libraries from the Librarians and Managers' Viewpoint.

Purpose: Historically, public libraries have always provided the general public with culture, education and recreation and their established mission has been to provide services and resources to satisfy users. The contribution of libraries and information services to communities' information needs has been considered as societal value. However, different factors like the advent of new technology, growing modern demands and changing users' preferences to use alternative information resources such as the Internet have put this role at the risk of disappearing in the future. Therefore, public libraries need to adapt efficient solutions to compete with new technology and secure their position in the information society. Applying the marketing mix assists the libraries to stay relevant to new expectations in the modern world. Marketing mix refers to the set of actions or strategies used by a library to introduce its services and resources to its users. The 4Ps make up a typical marketing mix of price, product, promotion and place. Accordingly, the aim of this research is to address the application of 4Ps and their priorities in marketing activities in public libraries in South Australia from the librarians and managers' viewpoint.

Design/Methodology: In pursuit of previous research studies in LIS marketing, a quantitative approach using a questionnaire was the research method of this study to explore the application of marketing components in approximately 140 public libraries. SPSS, version 22, was used for data analysis using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Findings: Since different questionnaire items were allocated for each marketing component, the weighted mean was calculated as the following shows the equality of means. Product (142.40), promotion (96.97), place (65.81) and price (40.03) were respectively the centre of attention for librarians and managers. Consequently, focusing on "product" or library services was the first priority for librarians and managers participating in this survey, "promotion" was the next centre of attention for them, marketing activities related to the component of

"place" stood in the third place regarding their range of application and "price" had the least importance and applicability for librarians and managers in South Australian public libraries.

Research limitations/implications: Since this study specifically targeted public libraries in South Australia, valuable data from other types of libraries including academic and special libraries would be missed. Investigating the same issues in different contexts can result in different findings. Concentrating on the opinions of librarians and managers towards the marketing-related activities performed in the libraries, results in missing the opinions of library users in this regard can be considered another limitation of this research.

Practical implication: The research findings may be used as an indication of the performance for South Australian public libraries regarding the application of marketing components in support of their image and value to their community.

Originality/value: This study appears to be the first attempt to explore the application and importance of marketing-related activities in public libraries in South Australia.

Keywords: Public libraries, Marketing, South Australia

Paper type: Research paper

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