INVESTIGATING THE PERSPECTIVE OF CENTRAL LIBRARY USERS AT AHWAZ TO ABSORB TO THE LIBRARY BASED ON MARKETING MIX (7P MODEL) CASE STUDY: CENTRAL LIBRARY, AHWAZ

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Abstract

Objective: The purpose of this study was to investigate the users' perspective in relation to important components for marketing by 7P model (product, price, location, staff, promote, process and physical evidence) in Ahwaz Central Library.

Method: The present study is a descriptive survey. The sample size in this study was 360 people estimated according to Cochran's sampling formula. Data gathered by a questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.92 using Cronbach's alpha. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software at two levels of descriptive and inferential statistics.

Findings: The findings showed that importance of factors from user's perspective including location, price, physical evidence, products, processes, staff and promotion. The results also showed a significant relationship between three components of marketing (product, price, staff and physical evidence) and demographic information.

The results and possible applications: The results of this research could lead to better attract of users to the Public Library and target the marketing activities.

Originality / value: The research is important which is done to attract Library users. Because their results can help managers and relevant authorities to attract users and more added value to the services provided by libraries.

Keywords: Marketing In Libraries, Model 7p, Ahwaz Central Library, Attracting the Audience, Marketing Mix.

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Introduction

Social and cultural developments of new technologies, especially the last few decades, has created a new look at the role of libraries and their performance. In the past, libraries were considered merely as a place to provide information resources and often managers and librarians did not pay much attention to the introduction of services and products. But nowadays libraries are trying to maintain their existence by providing a variety of services and quality to achieve this goal, implement new ways of marketing and principles seem to be associated with them(5).

Currently managers of libraries like other non-profit organizations realized the necessity and importance of marketing their products such as goods and services(2). It should be noted that marketing not only covers advertising, but also a clear understanding of the needs of the target audience is the main requirements for this. Marketing in libraries and information centers is a process that can help managers and librarians in achieving their goals in order to meet the needs of clients, achieve financial self-sufficiency and help attract users in today’s competitive world. Marketing provides an opportunity for libraries to change the physical facilities, materials and services and the quality of
their professional services. Also, efficient and effective marketing can be used to increase efficiency and ultimately to involve libraries. Public libraries in order to succeed in providing information services in a competitive world, should change traditional attitudes towards library users and provide services and move forward with a new approach of providing customer-focused services and accessories. The first attempt to develop marketing literature in library services dates back to before the 1970s. This argument discussed scientifically and written by Samuel Sett Green in America Library Association conference titled “Personal relations between librarians and readers” in 1876(3). Stearns introduced advertisements in the library in 1896 and added a word to the words associated in this field(4). Article quotes by Ren burg: Andres Schach Steenberg returned to Denmark in 1903 after studying in America. He explained about advances in the field of library including librarians go out to the slums and parks for the enjoyment of reading among children. Then develop services was introduced as a new concept in the library literature(5). Activities and resources published in this field was completed in 1975 with the publication of Cutler key as “Marketing for Nonprofits”.

In the mid-1980s, marketing was reflected as a trend in the field of library and information science. So, issues related to marketing in libraries were pursued and some libraries in different countries such as Northern Ontario in libraries Canada have attempted to implement the plan. In project is implemented in the trained librarians were how to use the brochure, website and virtual tour Library, library services will be introduced to the community(6). Marketing mix is a combination of four major marketing tools including product, price, promotion and place that is widely known as 4P. There are numerous proposals to expand 4P. The most useful suggestions are Booms and Bittner 1981 to draw the marketing mix to change 4P to 7P, i.e., people, processes and physical evidence to be added to the previous one(7). Farajpahlou and Jalil Poor examined the feasibility to apply 4P marketing model in Ahvaz Public Library according to managers and librarians perspective(8). Shabani et al examined the status of marketing process in libraries of Isfahan based on the model examined in marketing 7P(9). Norouzi and Arablu) examined principles of marketing in applied research in information services libraries from the perspective of users at Islamic Azad University in Tehran(10).

Public Library is one of the main places to get knowledge. With the explosion of information, the internet with this ghost and a variety of different sciences, library clients will be asked very different from the past. In the course of that information has been considerable work in different aspects of human life, it is expected that libraries and information centers will play an important role. Now is the time that services of libraries will be more customer-focused or client-focused. Therefore this study examines the library users of Khuzestan library as a reference in Ahvaz and Khuzestan based on 7P marketing model. It is hoped that the results of this research can help the policy of public libraries in promoting reading culture.

**Research questions**

- How is user perspective in relation to the marketing process in the Central Library, in Ahwaz?
- Which components of 7P are most important from perspective of users of Ahvaz Central Library?
- Is there any significance between the marketing process and their demographic characteristics?

**Research Methodology (society, tools and methods)**

This research is descriptive and survey method. The study population consists of mains users (members) of library in 2015. They were 6,000 objects. The sample size in this study was 360 people were estimated according to Cochran's sampling. The availability sample was sampled because the questionnaires were distributed and collected in the library. The questionnaires were distributed; finally 260 questionnaires were analyzed properly. The instrument used to collect the information was a made questionnaire, containing demographic questions and 36 questions in Liker scale (from very high to very low) to investigate seven components of marketing (product, place, process, price, staff, physical evidence and promote). Faculty members and librarians perspective at the University of Medical Sciences were used to assess reliability, Cronbach's alpha was used to test the results of which were 0.92. Statistical data analysis was conducted using statistical software SPSS V.16 in both descriptive and inferential level. Frequency, mean and standard deviation were used
in Descriptive statistics level. In inferential statistics, one-sample t tests and ANOVA were used.

**Findings**

Analysis of demographic factors showed that in this study, 154 patients (59.2%) are women and 106 (40.8%) are men.

**Education level**

As figure 1 shows, the lowest value is assigned to primary school level 1 patients (0.4%) and highest value assigned to per-university level with 110 students in terms of educational level (42.3%).

![Figure 1: Information related to educational level.](image)

**Employment status of the participants**

In figure 2 we see that in terms of jobs, the lowest value is unemployment with 31 patients (11.5%) and highest was students with 142 patients (54.6%). Other cases are specified in diagram 2 separately.

![Figure 2: Information relating to the employment status of participants.](image)

**Age Group**

In Figure 3, it is observed that the highest value is age group 1 (12-22 years) with 164 patients (64.6%) and the lowest rate is group five (53-64) with 4 people (1.5%). In order to determine the user’s perspective in relation to the marketing process, t-test was conducted. The results of these tests are presented in table 1. Based on the findings of Table 1, t is more than the critical value at error level of 0.05. The observed average is more than hypothetical average (3 = x), Marketing process is a relatively high level among the sample within the community.

In this section, perspective of users of Central Library Ahvaz about each of 7P model components (product, price, place, promotion, people, process and physical evidence) is studied. To do this, one sample t test was carried out and the results are presented in table 2.

![Figure 3: Information on age groups of participants.](image)

**Table 1: Results of one sample t test. Mean comparison with the hypothetical average (3 = x)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing process</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>0.566</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>19.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: One sample t-test findings. Mean comparison with the hypothetical average (3 = x)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>19.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>11.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>0.699</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>20.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.811</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>6.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>10.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical evidence</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>10.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing the average is each component with hypothetical average (3x) in table 2 show that the average of each component is significantly greater than hypothetical average. So we can see that the respondents mentioned the importance of components in Ahvaz Central Library has been higher than average. Among these, location component with an average of 3.88 and promoting with an average of 3.88 are highest and lowest level.

Other factors include: price, physical evidence, products, processes and staff are in secondary level. In order to answer the third question to examine the relationship between demographic factors with their view of the components of the marketing process, for each of the components of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. The results of these tests are presented in table 3.
Based on the findings of Table 3, at Sig≥0.05 in the demographic variables of age, the components of the product, the price and the staff there is a significant relationship between of the participants. Between the variable component of education with product and process variable component linked jobs is significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Age group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Component</td>
<td>Sig</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>0.349</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>0.128</td>
<td>0.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>0.149</td>
<td>1.791</td>
<td>0.907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>0.913</td>
<td>0.175</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>0.226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>0.031</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>0.664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical evidence</td>
<td>0.522</td>
<td>0.752</td>
<td>0.565</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: The statistics in terms of demographic variables and the marketing components.

Discussion and conclusion

The results of this study showed that users view on the application of the marketing process based on the model 7P in Ahvaz Central Library was higher than the average level, and stressed their view on the application of marketing components include: Product, price, location, staff, promote, process and physical evidence in the case library research. Among the previous research, the study of the Jazayeri Arab and Norouzi and Arablu in this regard that the view of library users had obtained the most similarities. In the second study, it was found that component of locations with an average of 3. 88 are most important for the Ahvaz central library users. Statements examined factors associated with the location, the distance, the attractiveness of the library building; commuting facilities for disabled persons include prominent signs for the blind, wheelchair ramp for the passage, floor to avoid the sound, appropriate signs at the library, charming decoration and the use of appropriate nature in the library. After, price with average of 3.77 and good cost of copy, free notification center, the cost of membership fees are in secondary importance. Physical evidence with the statements of components: educational signs, posters to promote library services, signs in the city and provide brochures are in third importance. Products, processes, staff and promotion are in place.

References


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