
Marketing The Academic Library Resources And Services: A Swot Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to investigate the Marketing initiatives of an Academic library by examining the library profile, marketing profile, user profile, user perception and SWOT analysis of Teesta-Indus Central library. The study found that Teesta-Indus Central Library has a strong foundation in marketing the library. The library employs marketing staff and uses traditional tactics such as user orientation, workshops, outreach, and face-to-face communication. The library also uses digital tools such as websites, SMS, RSS, email, and social networking sites. The SWOT analysis of the library reveals that the library has a substantial marketing standard. However, there are weaknesses in areas such as remote access and frequent power cuts. The library can excel in its service by expanding the library time and study rooms. Moreover, Users strongly agree on the importance of library orientation programs to make users aware of resources and services and to improve the value of the library among users. The library needs to improve the reading room, discussion space, and resources.

Keywords: Library Marketing, Academic Library, SWOT, Social media, Central University

Introduction

Libraries were considered the only sources of information for learners and information sources, in the past. Libraries today have the problem of attracting users owing to the advancement of digital technologies and changing users' demands. Disruptive technologies have affected the Academic library, changing user needs and alternate information providers (Iwu-James et al., 2020). Changing reading habits and influence have led to a dramatic drop in library visitors, calling for a new approach to library transformation and increased library marketing efforts (Kwan et al., 2023). On the contrary, Hines et al. (2019) reveal that the fundamental issue that libraries face today is that many students do not necessarily know what services the library offers or what librarians do and how they can help. Marketing the library helps solve those issues and helps stay relevant. Marketing fills that gap by ensuring the library services' usage and enlightening the users about the resources available in the library to support their reading needs (Mashiyane & Makhurupetsi, 2023). Marketing of library resources and services increases awareness and motivates students to use them (Atuase & Maluleka, 2023). The present study investigated the library marketing profile, users' profile and perception and conducted a SWOT analysis.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT is a strategy tool which is used in various industries, commerce, charitable, and organizations, with its extensive use dating back decades and still used in modern times (Sarsby, 2012). The acronym SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.



Figure 1: Showing SWOT Acronym

(Source: <https://www.bni.com/the-latest/blog-news/3-easy-steps-to-conduct-a-swot-analysis>)

The analysis helps optimize performance, maximize potential, manage competition, and minimize risk for workers and companies. It also helps in making better decisions, ranging from introducing new products or services to large-scale mergers or acquisitions, ensuring the effectiveness of any decision (Justin Gomer & Jackson, 2004). The SWOT analysis of the marketing initiatives will reveal the library's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in attracting users to the library.

Literature review

Joshua & Michael (2020) revealed, “marketing library is to achieve the user's need, which is the library's mission. Marketing helps promote resources and services like Reference services, Indexing and Abstracting services, and Internet access, whereas resources such as Books, Journals and Newspapers are all provided. Exhibitions and display of newly arrived resources are the basic technique of marketing the library”. Massis (2014b) highlighted that “library must use these marketing methods and recognize that their patrons share that space with them and have many contacts, which could increase its audience and user base. Atuase & Maluleka (2023) studied “Marketing of library resources and its impact on the library usage and found that the marketing of library resources and services increased awareness and motivates students, and there is no relationship between competencies in information literacy and the use of library resources and services beyond developing students’ capacity to use library resources”. Schwamm et al.(2009) investigated “the application of Marketing libraries by 14 European national libraries, their principals and curved out tactics to fight new challenge. The study found that the adoption of marketing by most libraries up to specific aspects and the adoption of marketing orientation to the most advanced level. Hines et al. (2019) highlighted that “Collaboration between librarians and patrons can be an effective tool to create successful marketing campaigns, but it is also important to gather and consider user feedback to properly reach that audience, as well as conduct an assessment to discern the efficacy and impact”. Wu(2020) in his study found that “competitive strategies give library marketing a competitive edge and suggested that academic libraries to adopt competitive intelligence to guide their marketing efforts to guarantee the survival and continuous growth of academic libraries”. Stoupenos & Woods (2023) emphasized “Electronic reference books should be marketed and promoted in a variety of ways by librarians to find the most effective methods. Traditional print reference is more visible in academic libraries than electronic reference. Surveyed librarians promote electronic reference books over print reference books. Usage statistics can help librarians identify marketing needs. Librarians and teachers should work together to develop collections and promote electronic reference books”.

Social media is becoming a trend today. Cheng et al. (2020) revealed, “Organizations like libraries have started using social media platforms like Facebook and highlighted that social media helps promote resources and services and develop relationships with patrons. Jones & Harvey (2019) revealed that “Libraries are starting to open an account in social media in an attempt to market their library with the potential users”. Gonzalez-Fernandez-Villavicencio (2015) addressed “the application of digital marketing strategy by libraries for social profitability (in terms of users),i.e., attracting more readers and more circulation”. (Roos, 2011)stated that “Librarians understand that using Facebook needs a great deal of time and effort, as pages need to be updated more frequently. He also noted that Facebook is underused for marketing the library in university libraries. The main reasons being lack of resources and some recall that the Facebook is not necessary in marketing as other mediums are sufficient..”. (Odocha et al., 2023) in their study found that

“Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter are the most commonly used social networking tools in academic libraries to market library products and services. On the other hand, Jones & Harvey, (2019) investigated “experiences and motivation of librarians (n=58) in using social media, and whether students (n=498) are willing to engage with the library in this manner, the study showed that libraries are indeed struggling to foster interest in their social media activities and go some way to understanding why this is so, leading to several conclusions and recommendations for practitioners”. The literature reveals that libraries are progressively marketing their services and product and explores for strategies for successful marketing. In the mean time Social media have found to become one important tool in marketing the libraries products and services.

Significance

Marketing the library is a comprehensive solution to the issues related to attracting users, communicating with them, and creating long-term relationships between the library and users. It is essential to study the marketing initiatives of the library and its impact on users. The present study analyses the academic library's marketing initiatives and users' perceptions and conducts a SWOT analysis of Teesta-Indus Central library, Sikkim University. The paper is limited to the Teesta-Indus Central library at Sikkim University. The paper has its limitations in its relatively small sample size. However, the small size is enough to get basic ideas about the library and the users and draw conclusions.

Methodology

The study examines the marketing initiatives of Sikkim University's central library. The study adopted a survey method. Two Structured questionnaires were designed to collect data. The first set of questionnaires was meant to collect data from the librarians to get information on the library profile, marketing profile and marketing initiatives taken by the library. The second set of questionnaires was designed to collect data from the users to analyze their profiles, awareness of library services and products, experiences, and satisfaction with the library services and products. After the convenience sample collection, the questionnaire was handed over to the Librarians and users who were available in the library building.

The collected data is then processed using MS Excel and analysed using Jamovi software. Jamovi is a free, open, and user-friendly 3rd generation statistical spreadsheet built on R, offering a compelling alternative to expensive products like SPSS and SAS (jamovi.n.d.). Responses concerning direct questions are listed with percentages, while those in descriptive frequencies and Likert scales are put into tables to derive the inference. In the meantime, the feedback provided by the users is grouped into different categories for better analysis. The collected data is then processed for SWAT analysis to draw conclusions and suggestions on the library.

Profile of the library

The library profile attempts to show the library's details and the marketing activities applied in the library. The detailed library profile is prepared from the response to the questionnaire given to the Librarian and is listed in Table 1.

Name of the library	Teesta-Indus Central Library
Estd	2008
Staff Strength	Professional-6, Semi-Professional-2, Others -5
Service provided	Inter Library Loan Reference Service Document Delivery Service Current Awareness Service (CAS) Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) Indexing Service Abstracting Service Bibliographic Service Orientation programme Wi-Fi OPAC Remote Access RFID Helpdesk Service Research Support (Grammarly...) Anti-Plagiarism Tools

Marketing Profile

Table 2 shows that the library carried out the marketing activities. It has a designated professional to look after the library's marketing activities. In the meantime, the library doesn't have any special funds to conduct marketing activities. The library's marketing strategies include traditional and modern techniques. Information promoted in Social Networking Sites includes updated services, marketing new books/resources, Upcoming Events, Links to related pages, and library images.

Table 2: Marketing Activities

Marketing the library	Yes
Marketing Fund	No
Designated Professional for Marketing	Yes
Marketing Tactics	User Orientation Programme, Workshop, Outreach, Annual Report, Display Latest arrivals, Face-to-Face Communication, SMS Services, Website, Social Networking Site, Email, Videos
Digital tools used	Website, Mobile Applications, SMS, RSS, Email Important Links, Social Networking Sites
Social Networking Sites used	Facebook, YouTube
Information promoted on Social Networking Sites	Updates Services, New books/resources, Upcoming Events, Links to related pages, and Images of the library.

Users Profile

Table 3 shows the user's profile describing the various categories of the users, such as gender, age, course taken by users, Duration of using the library, and frequency of library visits. Data reveals that male users accounted for 24.9%, female users were 25.1%, and postgraduate users were 26, accounting for 53.1%. The library usage rates vary between less than one year and more than three years, with 1-2 years being the most common. About 31(63.3%) use the library daily, and 7 (14.3) use it weekly and occasionally.

Table 3: Users' Profile

Gender			
	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Male	24	49.0 %	49.0 %
Female	25	51.0 %	100.0 %
Course			
	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Research Scholar	23	46.9	46.9
Post Graduate	26	53.1	100%
Duration of using the library			
	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative%
Less than 1 year	13	26.5 %	26.5 %
More than 3 Years	23	46.9 %	73.5 %
1-2 Years	13	26.5 %	100.0 %
Frequency of Visiting Library			
	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Monthly	3	6.1 %	6.1 %
Daily	31	63.3 %	69.4 %
Occasionally	7	14.3 %	83.7 %
Weekly	7	14.3 %	98.0 %
Fortnightly	1	2.0 %	100.0 %

Library Orientation

Table 4 shows the result of users' awareness of the library orientation. It is found that about 81.6% of the users are aware of the library orientation.

Table 4: Awareness of Library Orientation

Value Label	Counts	%
Yes	40	81.6 %
No	8	16.3 %
Not Sure	1	2.0 %

Table 5 shows that out of the 81.6% who are aware of the library orientation, about 65% attended the orientation programme.

Table 5: Library Orientation Attendance

Yes	26	65%
No	14	35%
Maximum	40	100%

User Perception of the Library

Users' perception of the library is shown in Table 6-10. It includes data in responses to various statements.

Table 6 reveals that the majority (53.1%) of the users agree that the library staff are well trained, and 38.8% strongly agree. It indicated the trust in the competence of the library professional among the library users.

Table 6: Frequencies of Q1. The library staff are well trained.	Value Label	Counts	% of Total
	Strongly Agree	19	38.8 %
	Agree	26	53.1 %
	Neutral	3	6.1 %
	Disagree	1	2.0 %
	N	49	
	Missing	0	
	Mean	1.71	
	Standard deviation	0.677	

Table 7 reveals that 53.1% of the users agree that the library staff adheres to professional standards of conduct and another 26.5% agrees to the statement.

Table 7: Frequencies of Q2. The library staff adheres to professional standards of conduct.	Value Label	Counts	% of Total
	Strongly Agree	13	26.5 %
	Agree	26	53.1 %
	Neutral	9	18.4 %
	Strongly Disagree	1	2.0 %
	N	49	
	Missing	0	
	Mean	1.98	
	Standard deviation	0.803	

Table 8 reveals that 46.9% of the users believe that the Librarian at the university library is knowledgeable and professional, and 46.9% agree with it.

Table 8: Frequencies of Q3. Librarian at your university is a knowledgeable and professional person	Value Label	Counts	% of Total
	Strongly Agree	22	44.9 %
	Agree	23	46.9 %
	Neutral	4	8.2 %
	N	49	
	Missing	0	
	Mean	1.63	
	Standard deviation	0.636	

Table 9 shows that 49.0% of the library users think the library staff are responsive to their questions about the resources and services, and 36.7% strongly agree. It indicated that users have a good experience with the library.

Table 9: Frequencies of Q4. The library is responsive to my questions about the library resources.	Value Label	Counts	% of Total
	Strongly Agree	18	36.7 %
	Agree	24	49.0 %
	Neutral	6	12.2 %
	Disagree	1	2.0 %
	N	49	
	Missing	0	
	Mean	1.8	
	Standard deviation	0.735	

Table 10 shows that 57.1% of users agree that the library staff listened to their questions and concerns.

Table 10: Frequencies of Q5. Library staff understand my questions and concerns.	Value Label	Counts	% of Total
	Strongly Agree	17	34.7 %
	Agree	28	57.1 %
	Neutral	3	6.1 %
	Disagree	1	2.0 %
	N	49	
	Missing	0	
	Mean	1.76	
	Standard deviation	0.662	

Users' Perception of Marketing the Library

Table 11-14 shows the users' perception of Marketing the library.

Table 11 shows that 44.9% of users strongly agree that the Library should organize an orientation program to make users aware of library resources and services.

Table11: Frequencies of Q6 Library should organize an orientation programme to make users aware of the library resources and services	Value Label	Counts	% of Total
	Strongly Agree	22	44.9 %
	Agree	19	38.8 %
	Neutral	7	14.3 %
	Disagree	1	2.0 %
	N	49	
	Missing	0	
	Mean	1.73	
	Standard deviation	0.785	

Table 12 shows that 53.1 % of the users believe that knowing the library products and services will attract users, and 34.7 % agree.

Table 12: Frequencies of Q7. Knowing the Products and Services will attract users	Value Label	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
	Strongly Agree	17	34.7 %	34.7 %
	Agree	26	53.1 %	87.8 %
	Neutral	6	12.2 %	100.0 %
	N	49		
	Missing	0		
	Mean	1.78		
	Standard deviation	0.654		

Table 13 shows that 42.9 % agree that there should be need-based services in the library, and 32% strongly agree with the statement.

Table 13: Frequencies of Q8. Need-based library services need to be developed	Value Label	Counts	% of Total
	Strongly Agree	16	32.7 %
	Agree	21	42.9 %
	Neutral	10	20.4 %
	Disagree	1	2.0 %
	Strongly Disagree	1	2.0 %
	N	49	
	Missing	0	
	Mean	1.98	
	Standard deviation	0.901	

Table 14 shows that 36.7 % strongly agree and are aware that they can approach the library staff to find their information needs, and another 34.6% agree with the statement.

Table 14: Frequencies of Q9. I know I can approach the Library Staff for finding the information I need	Value label	Counts	% of Total
	Strongly Agree	18	36.7 %
	Agree	17	34.7 %
	Neutral	14	28.6 %
	N	49	
	Missing	0	
	Mean	1.92	
	Standard deviation	0.812	

Swot analysis of Sikkim Central University Library

The SWOT analysis of the Library is as follows:

a. Strengths:

The strength of the library is as follows:

- i. The library has a strong marketing foundation as they thoroughly conduct library orientation and awareness programs (Table 4). Over 61% attended the program (Table 5).
- ii. About 53% agree that the library has a well-trained professional (Table 6). The well-trained professionals bring the proper function of the library and bring a positive image to the users.
- iii. The data also shows that 53.1% agreed that the library is running well with the professional standard of conduct (Table 7).
- iv. About 46.9% agreed, and 44.9% strongly agreed that the Librarian in the university is knowledgeable (Table 8).
- v. About 49% agreed, and 36.7 strongly agreed that the library staff are responsive to their queries about the library resources (Table 9). Responsive professionals result in better service for the users and hence save time of the users.
- vi. Understanding users' needs is the first step in marketing information. 57.1% of the users agreed that library staff understood the questions and concerns of the users (Table 10).

Weaknesses

1. Remote access to the library is not available (Table 15v). With technology's availability, remote access is becoming essential and widely used today, and it has been prominent since the COVID-19 pandemic. Remote access can provide students access to E-resources without visiting the library. Thus, it solves space problems and saves users time.
2. Users are also concerned about the rules some users do not follow (Table 15ii d). Library staff should always be there to maintain the library's rules. They should stand firm on students disregarding the library rules and regulations and frequently disrupting the library's peace.
3. Frequent Electricity cutoffs could disturb the user's study environments. The lighting of the study room can be compromised when there are no proper windows for the entry of natural light, and charging gadgets become problematic (Table 15viii).
4. Users are concerned about the sanitation of the lavatory and want it to be Clean and washed accordingly (Table 15v).

Opportunities

1. Students find the library is closing too early (Table 15ii, a&b) and even want it to be open on Sunday as well (Table 15ii c). While it is obvious that library services cannot be provided 24*7, students wanting for more study hours is a welcome sign, an opportunity that the library can grab.
2. Students want canteens in the library (Table 15vii). The canteen may be something that is not related to the library, yet crucial to users. Total concentration on studies and research takes a heavy toll on students and drains their energy as much as physical work. The availability of a canteen inside the library or on the premises of the library could be an opportunity. It could further function as a place to market the library resources.
3. Data in Table 11 reveals that 44.9% of users strongly agreed that the Library should organize an orientation programme to make users aware of library resources and services, and 38% agreed to it.
4. Data in Table 12 reveals that 53.1% of users agreed that knowing the resources available in the library will attract users.
5. Table 13 shows that users (42.9%) agreed they want need-based library services, and 32.7% strongly agreed.
6. A well-informed user is a sign of a robust library. Data from Table 14 shows that 36.7% of the total users strongly agreed that they know users can approach the Library Staff to find the necessary information, about 24.7% show agreement, too.

Threats

1. Users are also concerned about the study room and library discussion space (Table 15 iv). A library is not just a place where books are kept, nor is it about the number of collections available in the library. It is a place where users study, learn, and discuss their work. A study room of the proper size, a computer, and a discussion room will be a massive attraction to the library.
2. Noise is another concern of the users (Table 15 vi). History has revealed that reading and research are solitary activities without disturbance (Library Policies). The library must be silent to increase the concentration of the users. A noisy library can demotivate users from using the library.
3. Students also show concerns about the resources available in the library (Table 15i). Library resources include materials, both print and non-print, which are accessible to support the curricular needs of the users and personal information needs. The material needs to be updated and keep its currency to support the

reading and research needs.

Users Feedback

The following Table is related to the feedback provided by users. About 24 students provided feedback on their experience with the library. The responses are grouped under different headings and listed in the Table below.

i.	Library resources	a) We don't have enough books to look at. b) There are only a few books for reference. c) Required more new research-related books. d) Could not find all the books I needed. e) Some journals are inaccessible. f) We need more books on Nepali Language and literature. g) The books need to be updated for some departments.
ii.	Library Rules	a) The library closed too early (7 pm). b) Sunday is decorated as a holiday. c) The Duration of retaining the book being issued is too short. d) Some students disregard the library rules and regulations and frequently disrupt the library's peace.
iii.	Space	e) The library needs a more spacious room to accommodate the users. f) No room available for discussion
iv.	Lavatory	The lavatory is dirty. The lavatory (Sanitation) should be washed and Clean.
v.	Remote access	we do not have remote off-campus access facilities
vi.	Noise	Noise inside the library is a concern for some students.
vii.	Canteen	The canteen should be available in the library.
viii.	Electricity	Electricity is cut off sometimes, and the room is dark.

User Satisfaction

Figure 1 shows the user's satisfaction with the library products and services provided in the library; it is found that about 46.9% showed neutrality, 36.9% were satisfied, and 16% were very Dissatisfied. Overall, the figure shows that satisfaction with the library service is positive.

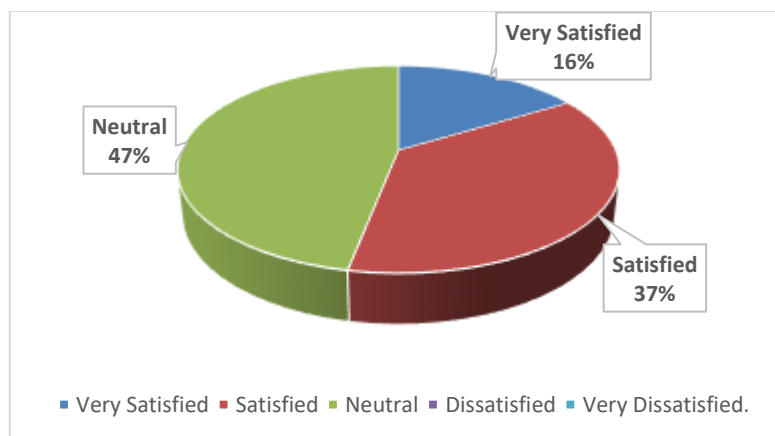


Figure 1: Showing Users' Satisfaction of Library Service

Discussion:

The library and marketing profiles reveal that The Teesta-Indus Central library is a well-established library with a strong marketing presence. Its designated professionals are performing marketing jobs despite the lack of funds. The library uses traditional and modern Marketing tactics, including user orientation, workshops, outreach, annual reports, and face-to-face communication. The library also shows presence in social media, which is essential today as Odocha et al. (2023) stated, "Academic libraries should embrace social networking tools to market their products and services". In the meantime, the user profile also reveals that the library has many daily visitors, mainly scholars.

The SWOT analysis of the Teesta-Indus Central library also reveals strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the library. The analysis reveals that the library has a substantial marketing standard by consistently delivering library orientation and awareness events, laying a solid groundwork for its future marketing efforts. As pointed out by Klaib (2012), market orientation components "have a high positive

impact on marketing performance” and are “beneficial steps in the evolution of a library” (Schwamm et al., 2009). The library has a trustworthy librarian and well-trained and knowledgeable staff, showing high professionalism, which suggests that library users have faith in librarians because they believe they are knowledgeable in the subject areas in which the libraries specialize.

The library also shows weakness in various areas. For instance, the library does not provide remote access to the library, which is essential today. Users show concern about the necessity of staff inside the reading room to make sure users follow the library rules and do not disturb the study environment. Frequent power cutoff is a concern raised by users in feedback. The library also needs a backup power supply, and the issue could be resolved by “installing solar energy to tackle the erratic power supply issue” (Odocha et al., 2023). The library also needs a cleaner washroom, which is a critical library space as stated by Mathews (2009) “Lavatory is an important library space to spread the message”, which needs attention.

The SWOT analysis shows that the library also has an opportunity to excel in its service. Extending the library time and expanding study rooms can be a great opportunity. Mathews (2009) highlighted that “reading rooms or group study rooms all become unique products in marketing”. The users show strong agreement on the importance of the library orientation program to make users aware of library resources and services, which library will attract users. The user’s orientation is identified to improve library customer value (Hallberg & Sipos-Zackrisson, 2010). Ameen & Waraich, (2007) also stressed about “clients centered orientation of the libraries”. As stated in the library Marketing profile of the Teesta-Indus Central Library, the positive outcome of the library marketing is shown by users when users agreed that they know they can approach the library staff for their information needs and are ready to go the extra mile by paying for the service they want.

There are areas that the library needs to improve, which are listed in the threat section of the SWOT analysis. The threats include the need for a study room, space for discussion in the library, and lack of resources that the students need. A noisy environment disturbs users “as the library is where students disappear from the noise and distractions” (Mathews, 2009).

Conclusion

The present study explores the extent of marketing practice in the Academic library by analyzing the Library Profile, Library marketing profile, user profile, and SWOT analysis. Overall, the Teesta-Indus Central Library has a strong marketing presence using traditional and modern marketing techniques. The library is well decorated with information within the library, displaying information and guides in the hallways. It also has a modern marketing technique like a website that is well maintained and shows the currency of information about the library in the website. Libraries today need digital marketing, and among the different social media tools, Facebook is one of the most popular (Phillips, 2011). The Teesta-Indus Central Library responded to today’s library problems well by employing a social media presence with information up-to-date on Facebook.

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