

DIRECTING TO ASEAN: MARKETING TREND IN MAHASARAKHAM LIBRARIES, THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

Market means a place of buyer and seller meet to carry of goods and services. Marketing is activity for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging user offerings. Marketing became relevance in both profit and nonprofit sector as libraries. Because of technologies rising, there has been a decline in the usage of libraries at the physical. So, the aim was analysis of marketing situation in nonprofit organization as Libraries in term of seller, buyer, ASEAN Influences and focus in Mahasarakham province, Thailand. The questionnaire , Interview and content analysis technique were used. Sampling were 381 libraries users in 8 libraries. The results presented four dimensions. 1) Buyer Dimension : the main target of users are in Academic Resource Center, Mahasarakham University (57.48%) and Rajabhat Mahasarakham University (28.87%) 2) Consumer Behavior Dimension: from black hole model applying for marketing environment and characteristics, popular product is Book, (70.8%), Internet (68.24%), 1-3 US \$ is reasonable price (76.38%), and promotion technique mostly is Public Relation (PR.) (25.20%). Buyer characteristic, motivate is Teacher (49.61%), Lifestyle is relax (29.92%), Personality is diligent (7.34%), and the high satisfaction was price ($\bar{x} = 4.17$) 3) Seller Dimension : There are three selling approach, Soft sell, Consultative Selling, and Customer Personality. 4) ASEAN Dimension : Mahasarakham Libraries presented ASEAN information as ASEAN Doll, ASEAN Vocabularies, ASEAN Flags, ASEAN Multimedia, ASEAN E-books. Finally, this result can apply for managing the nonprofit organization for directing to ASEAN year 2015 and increasing the foreigner guest, and improving English or ASEAN language further.

KEYWORDS : Marketing, Market, Libraries, Academic Libraries, ASEAN, Information Center, Library Service, Information Service

INTRODUCTION

Usually, Market means a place where buyer and seller meets together in order to carry on transactions of goods and services. In Economics, market can exist even without direct contact of buyer and seller. Market can be classified in three ways. Firstly, market is classified by place-local, national, international market. Secondly, market is classified by time,-very short period, short period, long period, and very long period. Thirdly, market is classified by competition -,imperfect competition, perfect competition. The imperfect can be divided in monopoly, duopoly, oligopoly, and monopolistic. [6]

Marketing is activity that has relevance not only for organizations within the profit sector of the economy but also for libraries and other nonprofit organizations. American Marketing Association defines marketing as: "Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large." Library or Information Center is institution which is a part providing all of the following ; an organized collection of printed or other material, or a combination of a staff trained to provide and interpret such material as required in order to meet the informational, cultural, recreational, or educational needs of the clients. However, today there has been a decline in the usage of libraries in institutes at the physical location since the students is more likely to be interfacing with various technologies; including computers, social networks, cell phones, PDAs, blogs, online learning tools, and numerous other tools. Especially, now 73% of researchers choose to search the internet before seeking resources in a library, the library is at risk of losing its position as the top source of initial inquiry. [9] As the reason, these new technologies phenomenon often require the libraries begun to creatively market to students search information via libraries effectively and libraries should be adapt for competition of learning resources mainly for educational environment. [7]

Information Centers, the organization is a non-profit and focus in the service business section. Besides, the mission of information center is "service" and the heart of the information society, as Gorman [7] says that "Information center or libraries related with the service mainly if without service, it does not mean anything". So, administrators and librarians who work in the information center should understand about business and marketing services correctly because librarians and information professionals should be responsible as a director or manager of information. They have to use marketing principles and techniques as a service to compete with the power that threatens to library service remains in quality and success. [6]

From library history, Information services which available in the market has been rising significantly since the year BC. 1876 when Samuel Swett Green delivered a speech at a meeting of the American Library Association, "Improve relationships between librarians and readers" By the way, from the important situations ;

the policy of self-reliance, the increasing of competitive conditions in the market for services, the rising of expectations of users about service, and the openness to access of information, these are reasons to make the market for information services in an institution is important and necessary Marketing Services in Information Centers currently rooted deep in library types in the U.S, the countries of Northern Europe, the countries with less education, wealthy countries, school libraries and librarians around the world. [4] Then, the real value of marketing library services is to have confidence that Information services and library services will remain and continue to grow.

Information Centers, as academic Libraries in Thailand have been influenced by the West. The centers tried to make the service as efficiently and effectively, Malai Wong [11] has pointed out the problem of academic libraries is important for three reasons; students and teachers do not use the library, librarians and administrators do not know how to adapt to globalization, and the concepts that believed that library allow user to walk in and use the service. This is consistent with research that found problems, such as Namthip [13] found that undergraduate students in public and private universities use of audiovisual media, print and electronic media, retrieving information in moderate level. It is a matter of concern in terms of value and interest of the students study. The various researches also study on how to assess the quality of service of university libraries in Thailand. That researches found that the quality of university library services do not meet user expectations and the satisfaction with library services are moderate level . So, the moderate answer is as most people feel quite satisfied level and means users will switch to another service that offers better [10], [16], [14], [8]

As the historical researches, they are worrisome about the use of Information centers with moderate levels of satisfaction with the service less. This is because the main task of the Institute of Information Services is a "service" and the main aim of "service" is to meet the needs of users and the users are satisfied from using those services and to service it. and over again because gaining the highest satisfaction can create the impression embedded in the user experience forever. Then, the aim of this research were analysis the application of marketing concepts in academic libraries in case of Mahasarakham province, Thailand. Mahasarakham is the small province with limited area that is full of various types of higher education institutions; state university, teacher college, nursing college, agricultural college, technical college, physical college, vocational College, and business college. Therefore, this research will build the better ways to develop information centers service to the highest service, development of the marketing concept in information science profession education, and especially, be information for information center around the world to concentrate of trend in information society , especially, be prepare information center in Thailand to towards the ASEAN Community in the year 2015, Thailand.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method of the research is mix method and details of tool, sampling as follow:

1. **Population and sampling** : Target population include administrators, librarians , and users of the information center at Mahasarakham province, Thailand. The sampling was selected from the population. The lists of eight information center as follow :

- 1.1 Academic Resource Center, Mahasarakham University (MSU)
- 1.2 Academic Resource Center, Rajabhat Mahasarakham University (RMU)
- 1.3 Library of Srimahasarakham Nursing College
- 1.4 Library of Mahasarakham Polytechnic College
- 1.5 Academic Resource Center, Mahasarakham Technical College
- 1.6 Academic Resource Center, Mahasarakham College of Agriculture and Technology
- 1.7 Academic Resource Center, Mahasarakham Vocational College
- 1.8 Academic Resource Center, Institute of Physical Education Mahasarakham

2. **Tool and statistics** : There are three different techniques to collect data ; questionnaires, interview, and content analysis. The statistics were used as Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation. For, the completed instrument consisted of two sections. Section I was designed to identify demographic attributes of the respondents. It contained demographic items such as gender, institute, and age. The questions in Section II were based on the satisfactions with libraries' services in case of marketing mix –Product or Service, Price, Place, Promotion. The response scale for items was a five-point, positively packed Likert scale coded as, 5: highest satisfaction; 4: high satisfaction; 3: moderate satisfaction; 2: low satisfaction; 1: lowest satisfaction.

RESULTS

The results can be divided in three dimensions by using marketing concepts as follow:

Part 1 : Buyer and Seller Dimension

The buyer type model comes from marketing. In this model there are four different roles people may play in the purchasing of a product. There are Buyer -The person who pays the bill, User – The person who uses the product, Influencer – The person who influences the decision to buy, Decider – The person who makes the decision to purchase the product. For some products the buyer, user and decider are the same

person. However, if these roles are played by different people then representatives of each group should be consulted during the product design process. [4] By the way, the seller or salesperson will be the provider of the goods or services. [17]

Since, Mahasakham province, Thailand becomes the outstanding area which is full of different libraries, seller, always supported about 74,655 higher educational students, buyer, every year. In 2013, Mahasarakham province provide eight academic libraries or information centers which different from each other in seven special fields ; for example, physical, nurse, teacher, agricultural, business, career, technical. Then, the 381 sampling were chosen from population as users follow Krejcie and Morgan table rule. [12] From the table 1, Teacher libraries found the main target of users is in Teacher Libraries (MSU, 57.48% and RMU, 28.87%) Business library is the second (3.49%) and the third is Agricultural library (1.66 %) Finally, libraries look as place that buyer and seller meets together in order to carry on transactions of goods and services, information resource or information service.

Table 1 Buyer and Seller at Mahasarakham Libraries

Libraries or Seller (N=8)	Population	Sampling	Percentage of User or Buyer (%)
MSU, Teacher Library	43,001	219	57.48
RMU, Teacher Library	21,482	110	28.87
Physical Library	1,143	6	1.53
Career Library	686	3	0.92
Agricultural Library	1,239	6	1.66
Business Library	2,602	13	3.49
Technical Library	4,159	21	5.57
Nursing Library	343	2	0.48
Total	74,655	381	100.00

* students statistics in 2011 [14, 15,16,17,18]

Part 2 : Customer Behavior Dimension

Customer behavior study is based on consumer buying behavior, with the customer playing the three distinct roles of user, payer and buyer. Research has shown that consumer behavior is difficult to predict. In 2013, the 381 sampling library users can be predicted by applying black hole model to analysis about environment and characteristics of buyer. The black box model considers the buyers response as a result of a conscious, rational decision process, in which it is assumed that the buyer has recognized the problem. However, in reality many decisions are not made in awareness of a determined problem by the consumer.[5]

From the table 2, buyer or customer behaviors are focus in two main factors, Marketing Stimuli and Buyer Characteristic. The Marketing Stimuli found in four ways- product, services, price, place, and promotion-then, the most popular product is book (70.8%), the most libraries service usage is Internet (68.24%), the reasonable price is 1-3 US \$ (76.38%), and the best promotion technique is Public Relation (PR.) (25.20%). By the way, Buyer characteristic can be found in four paths-motivation, lifestyle, personality, attitude- the first motivation of library customer is teacher (49.61%), the outstanding lifestyle of buyer is relax (29.92%), the main personality is diligent (7.34%), and attitude of library service about product (\bar{x} = 4.14), price (\bar{x} = 4.17), place (\bar{x} = 4.12), and promotion (\bar{x} = 4.03) are in high satisfaction. Especially, the first satisfaction for libraries is "price".

Table 2 Customer Behavior at Mahasarakham Libraries

Buyer Behavior Factor (N=381)										
Marketing Stimuli	Product		Service		Price		Place		Promotion	
	Book	270 (70.87%)	Copier /Printing	86 (22.57%)	1-3 US \$	291 (76.38%)	Everyday	84 (22.05%)	Award	18 (4.72%)
	Journal /Magazine	61 (16.01%)	Internet	260 (68.24%)	4-6 US \$	66 (17.32%)	2-3 times /week	279 (73.23%)	Fine	0 (0.00%)
	Newspaper	34 (8.92%)	Circulation	133 (34.91%)	7-10 US \$	0 (0.00%)	1 time /month	18 (4.72 %)	PR.	96 (25.20%)
	Computer file	122 (32.02)	Reference	60 (15.75%)	>10 US \$	24 (6.30%)	1 time /year	0 (0.00%)	Open Time	9 (2.36%)
Buyer Characteristic	Motivation		Lifestyle		Personality		Attitude to Library Service			
	Teacher	189 (49.61%)	Relax	114 (29.92%)	Tidy	9 (2.36%)	Product /Service	\bar{x} = 4.14 (S.D= 0.66), high satisfaction		
	Furniture	18 (4.72%)	Quiet	24 (6.30%)	Diligent	28 (7.34%)	Price	\bar{x} = 4.17 (S.D= 0.61), high satisfaction		
	New Media	36 (9.44%)	Comfort	15 (3.93%)	Informative	26 (6.82%)	Place	\bar{x} = 4.12 (S.D= 0.72), high satisfaction		
							Promotion	\bar{x} = 4.03 (S.D= 0.58), high satisfaction		

Part 3 : Seller Dimension

Administrator and Librarian at Mahasarakham Libraries have the role as sellers in market. A sale is the act of selling a product or service in return for money or other compensation and The seller or salesperson will be the provider of the goods or services. Marketing and sales differ greatly, but have the same goal. Then, Selling is the final stage in Marketing, which also includes Pricing, Promotion, Positioning and Product (the 4Ps). [17] marketing department in an organization has the goals of increasing the desirability and value to the customer and increasing the number and engagement of interactions between potential customers and the organization. Achieving this goal may involve the sales team using promotional techniques such as advertising, sales promotion, publicity, and public relations, creating new sales channels, or creating new products (new product development), among other things. It can also include bringing the potential customer to visit the organization's website(s) for more information, or to contact the organization for more information, or to interact with the organization via social media such as Twitter, Facebook and blogs.

There are many sales approaches for organization. Some may be relatively easy to learn, while others take time to understand the technique. Approaches depend on the buyers and the products or services. The example sales approaches can be divided in five ways. –Soft Sell, Hard Sell, Consultative Selling, Solution Selling, Customer Personality. [18] Many customers appreciate the soft sell approach and the seller can use gentle persuasion or suggestion to convince the buyer. Hard Sell is high-pressure tactics often are not well but it work sometimes. the salesperson might say “If you don’t buy it now, it won’t be here later,” Next, Consultative selling is a selling technique that might take days or months to close a sale and builds up a relationship of trust with the buyer. When buyers have problems in choosing the right product, whether it’s finding a unique gift for a special occasion or purchasing a product that fits user specific needs. Solution Selling involves asking many questions and listening carefully. Questions can help get to the root of the customer's problem and give the salesperson a clear idea of what to sell. Last, Customer Personality is the techniques focus on understanding the different types of customers. The salespeople need to keep their presentation short, but outgoing types can be easily distracted and slow to buy. Follow up with emails or phone calls and stress the benefits enthusiastically. Many sales training courses include understanding customer personalities.

From table 3, By the interview of librarian, Soft sell approaches were used in all Mahasarakham Libraries to presentation gentle persuasion or suggestion for information resource and information service ; for example, new entries, shelf system, online database, search, copier, etc. The other approaches that found in the libraries is consulting selling, solution selling, customer personality. The example of situation in consultative selling when analyze problems and offer solutions. This way use more days in interlibrary loan service for thesis. Solution Selling only found in Teacher Library (MSU, RMU) for serving user who need to buy international dissertation or international article that librarian will contract with agent of publishing. So, librarian will listen to the customer, get to the root of the customer's need which fits user specific needs. Some document will limit from publishing or has expensive price. The last approach that found in Mahasarakham Libraries is Customer Personality. The librarian should understand the different types of customers in , mainly students and teacher. Some students enjoy reading, relaxing, searching. Some teachers forgot the due date of book. Then, the librarians can follow up with emails or phone calls. By the way, Hard Sell is only the prohibit approach in all libraries.

Table 3 Different Sales Approaches at Mahasarakham Libraries

Libraries (N=8)	Soft Sell	Hard Sell	Consultative Selling	Solution Selling	Customer Personality
MSU, Teacher Library (http://www.library.msu.ac.th)	√	x	√	√	√
RMU, Teacher Library (http://arcm.rmu.ac.th)	√	x	√	√	√
Physical Library (http://www.mahalib.msu.ac.th/ipemk)	√	x	√	x	√
Career Library	√	x	√	x	√
Agricultural Library (http://www.mahalib.msu.ac.th/mcat)	√	x	√	x	√
Business Library (http://mahalib.msu.ac.th/mvc)	√	x	√	x	√
Technical Library (http://www.crazyboxer.net)	√	x	√	x	√
Nursing Library (http://202.129.54.82/ULIB/)	√	x	√	x	√

Part 4 : ASEAN Dimension

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967, with five founding members - Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand - signing the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) . Brunei Darussalam joined ASEAN in 1984, followed by Vietnam in 1995, Myanmar and Laos in 1997 and Cambodia in 1999. ASEAN emphasises regional cooperation in three "community pillars" of political and security cooperation, economic integration and sociocultural cooperation. Through the three pillars, ASEAN aims to achieve regional integration by 2015, especially in economic integration. [1]

Today, ASEAN —Brunei Darussalam, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam—makes up one of the world’s fastest growing economic regions. [3] ASEAN covers a land area of 4.46 million km², which is 3% of the total land area of Earth, and has a population of approximately 600 million people, which is 8.8% of the world's population. The sea area of ASEAN is about three times larger than its land counterpart. In 2011, its combined nominal GDP had grown to more than US\$ 2 trillion. If ASEAN were a single entity, it would rank as the eighth largest economy in the world. [2]

As figure 1, Mahasarakham Libraries present the ASEAN information in term of exhibition, website, ASEAN Room, Decoration. However, the language to present still be “Thai language” mainly. From the interview of librarian found that ASEAN is the main policy for Thailand, so all Mahasarakham Libraries follow the ASEAN idea and dissemination ASEAN information to staff and student in educational institutions. The decoration and media of ASEAN found in various objects ; for example, ASEAN Doll, ASEAN Vocabularies, ASEAN Flags, ASEAN Multimedia, ASEAN E-books. In 2013, ASEAN Information Center at Academic Resource Center, Rajabhat Mahasarakham University (RMU) presented the most informative website, display, information resources which mean the ready for directing to ASEAN in year 2015. However, the most users in Mahasarakham Libraries still be Thai Nationality so the ASEAN room sometimes found less foreigner and English or ASEAN language communication.

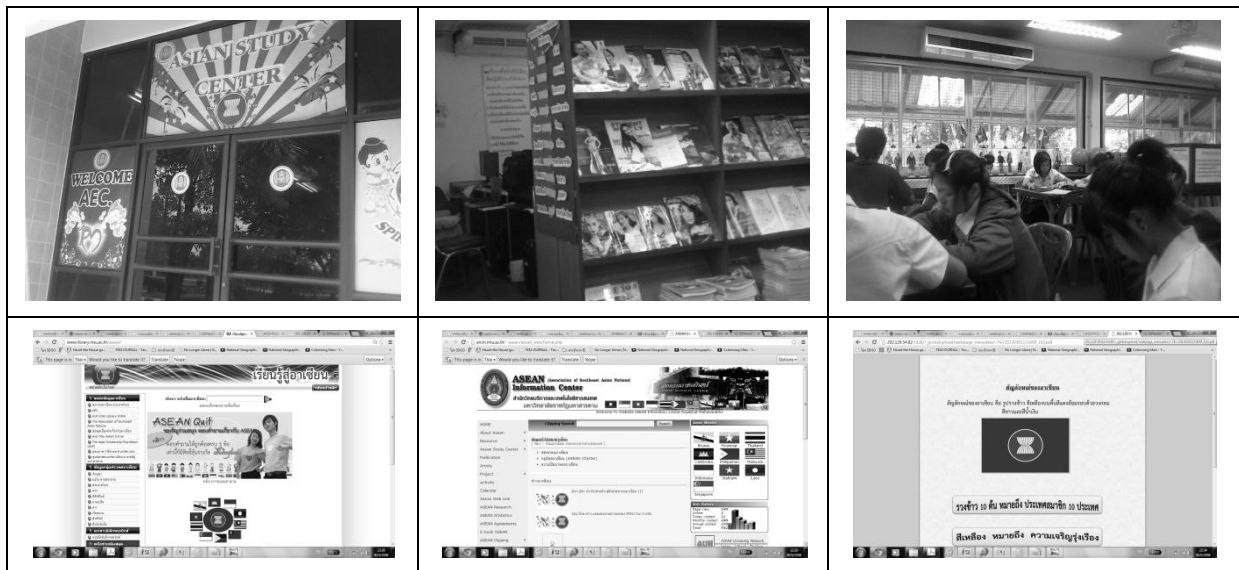


Figure 1 ASEAN Dimension in Mahasarakham Libraries

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The research can apply in three ways.

1. The marketing concept is the useful information to consider modifying of information center or libraries not only in Mahasarakham, Thailand but also the other local and international information center . Since, The marketing will focus on buyer, seller, and globalization. Especially, ASEAN direction in year 2015 that is the main factor to improve language skill and new international users.

2. The research can be used as a guideline for teaching about principles of marketing courses available in the Information Sciences Education in Thailand and around the world

3. The way of networks creation between information center or academic libraries in Mahasarakham Province, Thailand.

SUGGESTION

The future research should increase the use of statistics to compare the different demographic factor of users as sex and academic area have an impact to libraries' service in term of 10 nations in one community as ASEAN.

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