

# What Kind of Connection Exists Between Marketing Attitudes and Behaviour? A Peep into the Interacting Landscape of the Marketing and LIS World

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## Abstract

This paper attempts to find if there is any connection between the marketing attitudes and behaviour of librarians in thirty-three different libraries of Finland. Based on market-oriented behaviour, three kinds of libraries were found: *strong*, *medium* and *weak*. The findings indicate a positive relation between the marketing attitudes and behaviour.

## 1. Introduction

The application of marketing principles and techniques to the librarianship and information services (LIS) sector has been a debatable topic for the last 30 years ever since the domain of marketing was expanded to the non-profit organizations by Kotler and Levy (1969); Kotler and Zaltman (1971) and Shapiro (1973). As a result, the library literature consists of a plethora of articles on marketing of library and information services. However, in general, the literature reveals a paucity of empirical based scholarly activity on marketing in managing LIS sector despite the fact that these two disciplines, i.e., marketing and LIS have been interacting with each other for a long time. Thus far, there have been a few studies which reflect the increasing interest of researchers in understanding the attitudes of librarians towards marketing (Savard, 1996; Shontz, Parker and Parker, 2004). Simultaneously, some researchers also started to pay attention to understand the domain of market orientation (market oriented behaviour). Lozano (2000) provided a model for customer-orientation from the library managers' point of view. Harrison and Shaw (2004) attempted to study market orientation and marketing culture of all staff in a public library of Australia. However, why are some libraries more market-oriented than others? Remarkably, this fundamental issue has not been often addressed in empirical studies especially in the library world (Sen, 2006; Singh, 2005 a, b). As a consequence of this, the library literature reflects remarkably little effort to develop a framework for understanding the implementation of the marketing concept.

Thus, the recent literature shows the increasing interest of library and information professionals in understanding the constructs of marketing mentality and market orientation. However, given the importance of these two constructs- market orientation and marketing attitudes, it is surprising to note that no published study has yet attempted to empirically investigate the linkage between market orientation and marketing attitudes of library and information services providing institutions (Singh, 2005 c). Against this backdrop, this paper attempts to find if there is any connection between the marketing attitudes and behaviour of librarians. The key issues which have been tackled are those relating to the individual psychology, attitudes (need for marketing,

convenience to the consumers, physical environment, communication, quality of library services, customer appreciation, developing relationship, and implications of marketing, etc.) and behaviour (customer philosophy, inter-functional coordination, strategic orientation, responsiveness, competition orientation and pricing orientation) of the library directors on employing marketing concept in the library environment. Moreover, this study examines and attempts to take stock of the interacting landscape to better understand the nature and interrelationship of these disciplines and the implications of changes occurring within and across them for scholarship and their consequences for practice.

## 2. Methods and Materials

The research data were collected from autumn 2002 through spring 2003. The libraries were selected from the home page of *Gateway to Finnish Research Libraries* which consisted of 23 University and 10 special libraries in the south of Finland. The library directors participated as the target respondents in this study. The libraries were chosen from the diverse subject fields representing different disciplines such as art, theology, humanities, social sciences, law, pure sciences, technology, and economics and business so that a broader picture of the marketing cultures of different libraries could be obtained.

A semi- structured interview guide consisting of both open and close ended questions was created for generating the data from library directors. The interview guide for library directors also requested information about certain personal and professional characteristics such as their experience, marketing education and exposure to marketing seminars and conferences of the respondents. The market orientation scale, adapted and modified from Lozano (2000), consists of 23 statements (table 1). From these statements of table 1, a factor called “market orientation” was derived by using factor analysis method. All items of the above scale were measured on a five-point Likert scale. The reliability analysis revealed the Cronbach alpha coefficient 0.8601 for the overall model, which reinforces the reliability of the scale and internal consistency of its items. Based on this factor “market orientation”, libraries have been classified into three categories on the assumption that if respondents have market-oriented behaviour then marketing attitudes should also be reflected accordingly:

- Weak market oriented (the lower 25 % of market orientation scores)
- Medium market oriented (the middle 50 % of market orientation score)
- Strong oriented (the top 25 % of market orientation score)

The *attitudes* of library directors were collected in the following areas of marketing which have been compared with their market oriented behaviour with the help of F-test and cross tabulation to find out if they are consistent with each other and what kind of inter-relationship exists between these two variables:

- Need for marketing
- Convenience to the consumers (accessibility of services)
- Concrete evidence and experience to the consumers about physical environment
- Communication with the consumers (traditional promotional aspects)

- Quality of library services (modern marketing approaches)
- Customer appreciation
- Developing relationship with customers
- Internet as an effective tool for marketing
- Future implications of marketing

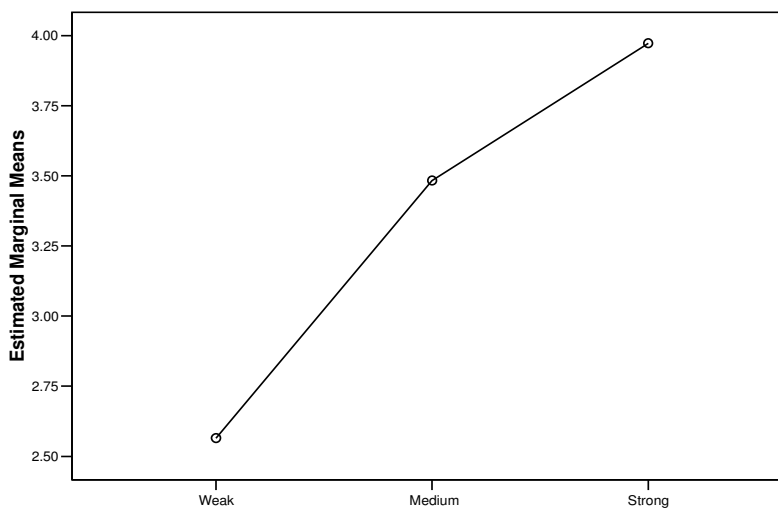
Thus, in brief, this study examines the inter-relationship between market orientation and marketing attitudes of different libraries. This research has used a combination of qualitative as well as quantitative methods in order to understand the overall impression of the library's marketing culture which helped to analyse the required in-depth issues adequately. However, the results presented in this paper are mainly quantitative.

### 3. Three Kinds of Market Orientation

Based on factor and ANOVA analysis, three levels of market orientation are identified: *weak*, *medium* and *strong*. The means, F value and significance level for the different dimensions and items of market orientation are presented in table 1.

As it appears from figure 1 that the strong market oriented libraries have obtained the highest mean (3.97) by outperforming the medium (3.58) and the weak (2.46) group of libraries in overall market orientation. There is an indication of significant difference of market orientation across the three different types of libraries ( $F=43.765$ ;  $p=.000$ )

Figure 1: Estimated Marginal Means of Market Orientation



$F=43.765$ ;  $p=.000$

Although Lozano's model covers all those aspects and to measure factors such as the degree of customer-market-orientation, the organizational culture, function integration and co-ordination, long term view, marketing training, competition orientation or information available about the market, and some quality related aspects, but it doesn't indicate clearly the different dimensions of market orientation in the context of libraries.

The present research has attempted to measure the market orientation of the libraries which has been further classified into the following different dimensions (Appendix 1):

- (1.) customer philosophy
- (2.) inter-functional coordination
- (3.) strategic orientation
- (4.) responsiveness
- (5.) competition orientation
- (6.) pricing orientation

#### **4. Marketing attitude vis-à-vis market orientation**

This section reports the findings about the attitudes of libraries towards different aspects of marketing and attempts to determine if there is any relationship between these marketing attitudes and their marketing behaviour. Based on the analysis, the profiles of the marketing attitudes of the three groups of libraries appeared as under:

##### **The strong market oriented libraries**

The strong market oriented libraries demonstrated the most positive attitudes towards different aspects of marketing. They attach the highest importance to the need to apply marketing principles for carrying out the business activities of libraries. Significant difference has been found in this aspect across the three market orientation and these libraries have obtained the highest score. They believe that library is like a complete packaged product. They stress the physical environment and appropriate promotional guidance for library customers to help them in finding the learning resources in the library. These libraries aim to build a relationship with their customers by offering tailored services and products which satisfy their information needs and problems. They do believe that the quality of services can be raised by putting more effort in acquiring knowledge about customers' information needs and demands. They advocate the use of appropriate market segmentation techniques and customer surveys as a mean of raising the quality of library services. Moreover, they believe that the motivated team work of the staff is crucial towards the attainment of this goal. These libraries advocate firmly the use of term 'client' or 'customer' for the library users unlike the weak market oriented libraries. However, in some aspects, such as free-of-cost services, assessment of direct and indirect cost, consideration of users' shyness, timeliness of services and sustaining traditional services, these libraries reflect the most negative attitudes.

##### **The medium market oriented libraries**

A good number of medium market oriented libraries hold a perception that marketing is somehow close to "identifying and meeting customer information needs". However, in most of the aspects of marketing they appear to show mixed opinions. The most typical attitudes of this group are the respondents' inclination towards the 'pricing' and 'promotional' aspects. These two aspects are one of the two "Ps" of the classical traditional marketing mix (4Ps: Product,

Price, Place, and Promotion). Even though libraries are strongly in favour of providing their services free-of-cost, they feel that in future the situation might arise when it might not be possible for libraries to do so. They also believe in creating awareness among the clientele for their products and services through different promotional activities. On the contrary, they seem to reflect negative opinions on matters such as need for marketing application in libraries, accessibility of services, and monitoring of mission statements. Nevertheless, the libraries support the use of term 'clients' and 'customers' instead of library user which demonstrate their inclination towards the marketing concept. Moreover, they also believe that marketing can be helpful to a higher extent in raising the quality and use of library services.

### **The weak market oriented libraries**

The attitudes of the weak market oriented libraries demonstrate that these libraries do not have any specific attitudes towards different aspects of marketing. To them, marketing is not a concept of much importance in their library activities. The libraries do not seem to appreciate that the quality of library services can be raised by putting more efforts in acquiring good knowledge about customers' needs and demands. They also do not appear to grasp the concept of market segmentation and as such do not seem to believe much in providing different service offering to different customer groups. Instead, their interest is primarily more internal 'library focused'. This can be noticed in their most positive attitudes about sustaining traditional services. In most of other respects, including the need for marketing, physical environment, quality of services, promotional aspects, and implications of marketing, these libraries keep low profile. The 'introvert' approach of libraries is reflected in their reservation of the use of the term 'client' or 'customer' where most of the libraries responded negatively or neutrally. Yet, they do believe that marketing helps in raising the quality of library services and can be helpful in increasing the use of library collections, facilities and services. Moreover, these libraries reveal the most positive attitude towards providing accessibility of services. But, "identifying and meeting customer information needs" as the primary indicator of the acceptance of marketing approach aiming at 'customer satisfaction' is a missing attitude, in this group of libraries.

## **5. The connection between market-oriented behaviour and marketing attitudes**

This section explains the extent to which market orientation and marketing attitudes are inter-related. It is apparent from Table 1 that in the strong market oriented group, half of the respondents have high marketing attitudes as is reflected in their market-oriented behaviour. But, the other half of the members' marketing attitudes are not consistent with their strong market oriented behaviour. Three respondents maintain a medium attitude whereas one respondent holds weak attitudes towards different aspects of marketing. Similarly, in the medium market oriented group, nine respondents have medium attitudes, which is consistent with their medium market-oriented behaviour but four members reflect high marketing attitudes like the strong market oriented group while four others keep low marketing attitudes as observed in the weak market oriented group. Likewise, variation between marketing attitudes and behaviour exists in weak market-oriented group as well where five members maintain medium attitudes in contrast with other three members whose weak attitudes are in accordance with their behaviour.

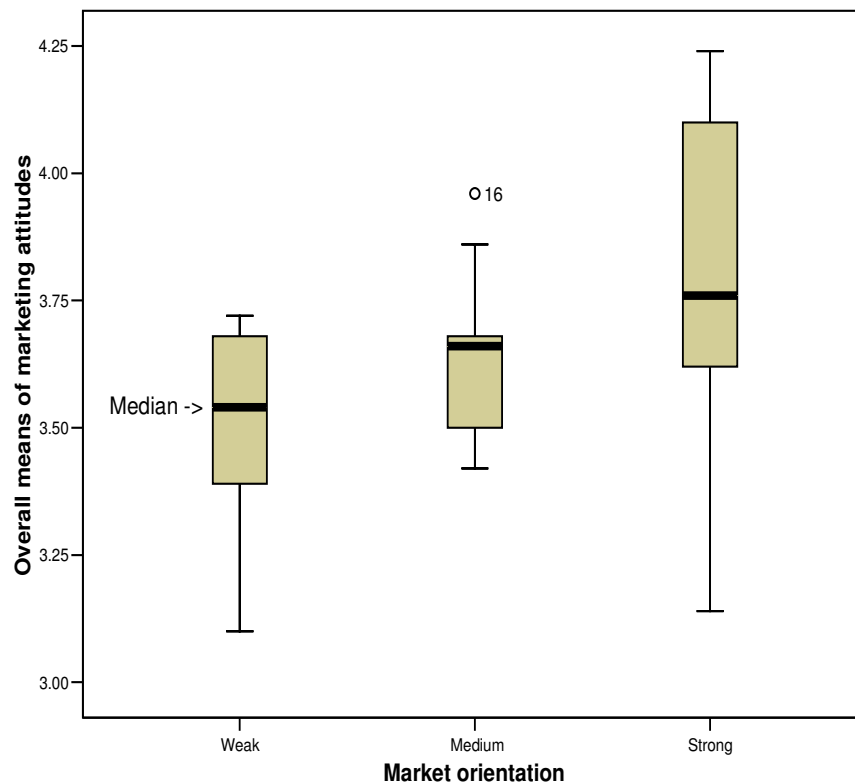
Table 1: Overall marketing attitude in relation to market orientation

		Marketing attitude			Total
		Low	Medium	High	
Market orientation	Weak	3 37.5%	5 62.5%	0 .0%	8 100.0%
	Medium	4 23.5%	9 52.9%	4 23.5%	17 100.0%
	Strong	1 12.5%	3 37.5%	4 50.0%	8 100.0%
Total		8 24.2%	17 51.5%	8 24.2%	33 100.0%

### Level of marketing attitudes in relation to market orientation

As shown by Figure 2, the means of the overall marketing attitudes of upper half of the respondents in the strong market oriented group (above the median line) is in the range of 3.76 to 4.24. It can be noticed that the means of the upper half of the strong market oriented group is quite higher compared to the means of the upper half in the medium and weak groups. It is interesting to observe that there is one respondent in the strong market oriented group whose means of overall marketing attitudes are quite low almost like the weak group of libraries. In the weak market oriented group, the range of the higher means of the upper half is in between 3.54 to 3.72. This indicates the sharp difference between the overall marketing attitudes and behaviour of the members of the weak and strong group of libraries. The range of the means of the upper half in the medium group comes in between 3.66 to 3.96. It also reveals that there is one respondent (O 16= observation 16) in the medium group whose marketing attitude (observation 16) is very different (quite higher) than the other respondents of this group.

**Figure 2: Level of marketing attitudes in relation to market orientation**



## 6. Discussion

The findings indicate that a positive marketing attitude of the library leadership is a prerequisite for the market oriented behaviour of library. This is supported by the strong positive association between the market orientation and marketing attitudes of library leadership. One important factor which needs attention is to remove confusion about marketing at the conceptual level. This research has shown that the concept of ‘marketing’ has a bad image in the minds of some respondents which has resulted in their aggressive expression such as “hate” and “dirty word”, etc. In principle, such respondents do not necessarily like to be associated themselves with something that is ‘labelled’ *marketing* particularly in the libraries which belongs to the service profession. Earlier studies of Savard (1996), and Shontz, Parker and Parker (2004) have also reported similar findings about the notion of marketing in the librarianship and this may be the case in the libraries of other cultural contexts as well. Continuing marketing seminars, education and training courses can be an appropriate answer for removing the barriers at the conceptual and operational levels in libraries so that marketing becomes a higher priority. Grönroos (2007) emphasizes that in order to create an understanding of relationship marketing in an organization and to implement a culture of relationship marketing, it may be necessary to replace the term ‘marketing’ with a psychologically more rapidly accepted term to describe the task of managing the organisation’s customer relationship. The librarianship could also try in similar direction to find a suitable term for ‘marketing’ which does not attack its ethics and traditions but fits in better if the myths and confusions of marketing at conceptual level cannot be removed. In addition, this notion offers interesting and challenging research opportunities. Moreover, the study also shows that higher professional experience of library leadership also helps the library

to move in the direction of attaining higher market orientation. Therefore, these antecedents which emanate from the findings of this research are important indicators for further augmentation of the library leadership.

## 7. Conclusion

The paper demonstrates that there is a positive connection between the marketing attitudes and behaviour. Nevertheless, it also indicates that there can be exceptions too when marketing attitudes and behaviour may not be in accordance with each other which may be because of different factors such as professional experience, marketing education, seminars, training courses, personality of individuals, and institutional culture, etc. The study concludes that the gradual integration of the marketing concepts into LIS sector has influenced the scholarly landscape of the LIS discipline and its managerial practice. Examples of such changes include the increasing acceptance of many marketing jargons and terminologies such as ‘customers’, ‘profitability’, ‘bottom line’, ‘value-added activities’ and ‘competition’, etc., into the LIS landscape which were considered alien in the beginning. It is stressed that this new landscape provides both opportunities and challenges for future scholarship and practice in these related disciplines. The examination and findings should be of value to those attempting to understand the evolving nature and interrelationship of these fields, and those who currently practise within them.

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## Appendix 1: Comparing different dimensions of three market oriented groups of libraries

<b>Market orientation (MO) dimensions</b> F= 43.765; $p = .000$	All libraries (N=33)  Mean 3.3794	Weak MO (N=8)  Mean 2.5652	Medium MO (N=17)  Mean 3.4834	Strong MO (N=8)  Mean 3.9728
<b>Customer philosophy</b> F= 6.637; $p = .004$	3.7475	3.0833	3.8824	4.1250
1. In the library, there is a great awareness of the importance of being an organization prepared to meet the users' needs and wishes. (F=6.846; $p = .004$ )	4.61	4.00	4.71	5.00
2. The knowledge of our customers' needs and wishes is the base for all marketing activities of the library. (F=9.134; $p = .001$ )	3.85	2.50	4.18	4.50
3. It's very difficult to fulfil our promises all the time. (F=.029; $p = .971$ )	2.79	2.75	2.76	2.88
<b>Inter-functional coordination</b> F = 10.277; $p = .000$	4.0758	3.1250	4.2500	4.6562
1. The activities of different library departments are coordinated in a way that improves the users' level of satisfaction. (F = 18.976; $p = .000$ )	3.58	1.88	4.00	4.38
2. Our staff work as a team: we share responsibilities, information and decision making. (F = 4.096; $p = .027$ )	4.36	3.63	4.41	5.00
3. The credit of achievement is shared by all levels of the organization, not just by the management. (F = 2.455; $p = .103$ )	4.09	3.25	4.29	4.50
4. In our library, we have put emphasis on developing communication channels to guarantee that the opinions of the staff who interface with the users are taken into consideration. (F = 2.271; $p = .121$ )	4.27	3.75	4.29	4.75

# Appendix 1: Comparing different dimensions of three market oriented groups of libraries (contd.)

<b>Market orientation (MO) dimensions</b>  F= 43.765; $p = .000$	All libraries (N=33)  Mean 3.3794	Weak MO (N=8)  Mean 2.5652	Medium MO (N=17)  Mean 3.4834	Strong MO (N=8)  Mean 3.9728
<b>Strategic orientation</b> F= 40.105; $p = .000$	3.2929	2.2361	3.4641	3.9861
1. We regularly collect information on the needs and wishes of our customers. (F = 8.051; $p = .002$ )	3.88	2.75	4.06	4.63
2. We have differentiated offers and differentiated plans for the various users segments. (F = 2.138; $p = .116$ )	3.12	2.50	3.06	3.88
3. For each user segment, we have identified the critical success factors in the use of our services. (F = 6.577; $p = .004$ )	2.73	1.75	2.71	3.75
4. We introduce changes in the specifications or in the characteristics of our services / products when we identify new user needs. (F = 26.758; $p = .000$ )	3.48	1.63	3.88	4.50
5. When preparing strategies, the library takes into account the impact of changes in the environment. (F = 3.781; $p = .034$ )	4.58	4.13	4.65	4.88
6. Staff members responsible for library areas or services have marketing experience or knowledge. (F = 10.171; $p = .000$ )	2.30	.87	2.65	3.00
7. We are very careful in selection of staff who interact with the customers. (F = 2.179; $p = .082$ )	3.18	2.13	3.41	3.75
8. We thoroughly train the staff members who interact with the customers. (F = 11.406; $p = .000$ )	3.42	2.00	3.59	4.50
9. It is not possible/ necessary to treat all the users equally. (F = 1.195; $p = .317$ )	2.94	2.38	3.18	3.00

# Appendix 1: Comparing different dimensions of three market oriented groups of libraries (contd.)

<b>Market orientation (MO) dimensions</b>  F= 43.765; $p = .000$	All libraries (N=33)  Mean 3.3794	Weak MO (N=8)  Mean 2.5652	Medium MO (N=17)  Mean 3.4834	Strong MO (N=8)  Mean 3.9728
<b>Responsiveness</b> F= 2.029; $p = .149$	3.1438	3.2500	3.3235	3.8438
1. We put efforts on adapting as much as possible our services to the specific needs of each customer. (F = 4.874; $p = .015$ )	3.97	3.25	4.00	4.62
2. If any information is not available in the library, then we have no responsibility to provide suggestions on where to look for information outside the library. (F = 4.837; $p = .015$ )	4.27	4.88	3.65	5.00
3. Sometimes, it is hard to reach the quality standards we set to ourselves. (F = .504; $p = .609$ )	2.61	2.25	2.65	2.88
4. Although, it's good to show respect for our users, listen to them, pay due attention to their problems and treat them as individuals, but due to some reasons, we don't behave as such in practice all the time. (F = .296; $p = .746$ )	2.88	2.63	3.00	2.88
<b>Competition orientation</b> F = 15.226; $p = .000$				
1. At some point, we have carried out an in-depth analysis of our main competitors and of the strengths and weaknesses of each one of them.	1.85	.75	1.82	3.00
<b>Pricing orientation</b> F= 5.221; $p = .011$	2.4848	1.6875	2.5882	3.0625
1. We have a precise idea, by user typology, of the cost and benefit as a function of the level of use of each one of services. (F = 4.369; $p = .022$ )	2.55	1.75	2.59	3.25
2. We have considered the cost-benefit ratio for each one of the services and the convenience of relocating them, promoting them or getting rid of them depending on their level of use or the importance given to them by users. (F = 4.016; $p = .028$ )	2.42	1.63	2.59	2.88