

Innovative Reference Service Model for Academic Libraries in Thailand: Concept Paper

Kittiya Suthiprapa

Doctor of Philosophy Program in Information Studies,
Khon Kaen University, Thailand
kittsu@kku.ac.th

Kulthida Tuamsuk

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Khon Kaen University, Thailand
kultua@kku.ac.th

Introduction

Reference service for academic libraries in Thailand can be considered as the heart of the libraries. The reason is because library is the center for providing information services to support teaching, learning, and research for both lecturers and students. Library, therefore, should pay attention to the effectiveness of proactive services and develop innovative reference model to respond user experience. Service marketing strategy, consequently, can be applied to use with reference services to upgrade, add more value, and increase the effectiveness of services providing. This proactive service management can quickly, completely, and perfectly respond the needs of the users. It is up to date, accessible, and easy to respond the needs of the users as well.

Rationale and Background

Reference service for academic libraries in Thailand can be considered as the heart of the libraries. The reason is because library is the center for providing information services to support teaching, learning, and research. Library, therefore, should pay attention to the effectiveness of proactive services and develop standard innovative reference model. The environment is rapidly changing and resulting in information format, knowledge, and information technology; therefore, libraries should change the way they provide reference services by applying information technology to increase channels for providing services and respond user experience. Service marketing strategy, consequently, can be applied to use with reference services. Siriprasert (2010) had done research on user experience that was applied from customer relationship management. The results revealed that user experience according to their fields were different. Many libraries adapt customer relationship management to use for their management; however, the libraries rarely analyze user experience to understand their needs and their attitudes. Nevertheless, the users were not clearly categorized into groups. As a results, libraries reference services cannot access or be provided to respond the needs of the diverse groups specifically.

Reference service is different from other products. The focus on user experience in service marketing strategy for reference service shows proactive management that can quickly,

completely, and perfectly respond the needs of the users. This also improves and increases the effectiveness of service providing by applying modern information technology as a tool to promote innovative service. It also accesses and responds the needs of users in different groups as well. According to the literature review and other related studies in Thailand and abroad, there is no research study the innovative reference service for academic libraries in Thailand that determine objectives, components, service model, and service approach clearly enough for applying to use with other academic libraries in Thailand. The objectives of this study are to create the innovative reference service model that consists of clear services, service operation, and support factors. The model must respond user experience by adapting service marketing strategy to usefully and effectively increase quality service according to users' needs, expectation, satisfactory, and happiness.

Research Framework

This research aims to study innovative reference service model for academic libraries in Thailand. The research frameworks that are adapted to this study include the role of reference service (Bopp & Smith, 2001; Cassell, K. A., & Hiremath, U., 2011; Burke, L., 2006; Samuel Swett Green, 187; Prongmaneeikul, 2014), user experience framework (Rohrer, 2014; Stern, 2014), service marketing strategy (Chaoprasert, 2013; Chowdhury, et.al, 2008), innovative service framework (Hertog, 2000), and other literature review and related studies. The study will be done by synthesizing literature from related documents and related studies to apply and develop innovative reference service model for academic libraries in Thailand. The issues that will be considered are as follows: (Figure 1)

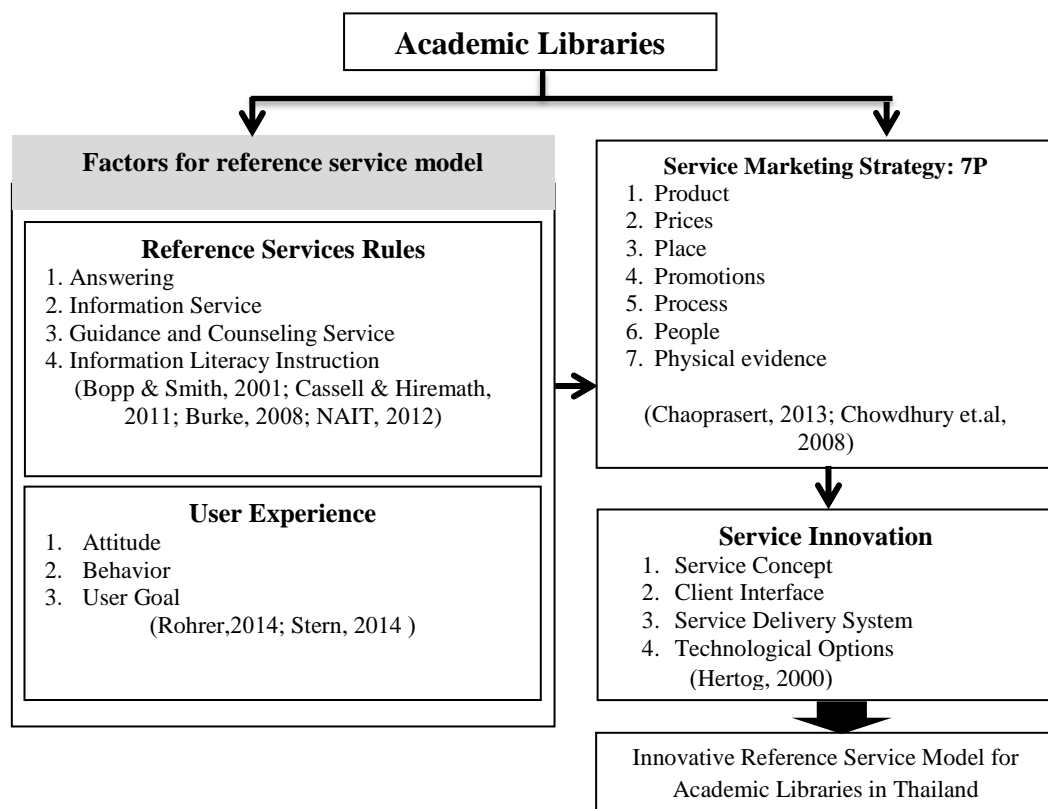


Fig 1. Research conceptual framework

1. The factors to determine reference service model

The factors to determine reference service model consists of two main procedures as follows:

1.1 The investigation of the condition of reference service for academic libraries in Thailand
According to the literature review, the role of reference service consists of four main duties that are answering, providing information service, providing guidance and counseling services, and providing information literacy instruction.

1.2 The investigation of user experience related to the reference service consists of three components as follows:

1.2.1 *Attitude* is the study to understand knowledge, belief, and feeling of users to product or service that they like or dislike in order to know their motivation to use or do not use the product or service.

1.2.2 *Behavior* is the analysis of user's behavior in searching, accessing, evaluating, and making decision to use or do not use the product or service in order to respond their needs and expectation to get the highest satisfactory.

1.2.3 *User's purpose* is the study of the context where information services are used in order to study the problem solution and decision making that support users' success in their operating tasks.

2. The procedure to manage reference service according to user experience and applying the use of service marketing strategy

This procedure will study uses' characteristics, attitude, behavior, and context of the use of reference service in order to create the model of reference service according to user experience and applying the use of service marketing strategy. The service marketing strategy that is adapted to this study consists of 7P including Product, Prices, Place, Promotions, Process, People, and Physical evidence.

3. The development of innovative reference service for academic libraries in Thailand

This study uses innovative service framework to apply for developing innovative reference service model for academic libraries in Thailand. The framework consists of four components that are Service Concept, Client Interface, Service Delivery System, and Technological Options.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the condition of reference service of academic libraries in Thailand
2. To study user experience that relates to reference service
3. To study the procedure to develop innovative reference service according to user experience and applying the use of service marketing strategy
4. To develop innovative reference service model for academic libraries in Thailand

Significance of the Study

1. The study will reveal the condition of reference service of academic libraries in Thailand that is operating nowadays. This is the important data for further development of reference service of other libraries.
2. User experience that relate to reference service of academic libraries in Thailand will be analyzed. This is the important data to understand user and to provide reference service to respond the actual needs, expectation, and behavior of the users. This will further lead to the successful development of reference service of academic libraries in Thailand according to user experience and applying the use of service marketing strategy. The strategy will be useful for other universities in Thailand to use as a model to develop their reference services as well.
3. The innovative reference service model for academic libraries in Thailand will be created according to user experience by applying the use of service marketing strategy. This is the new knowledge that can be used to determine service and operation of reference service to be more specific and be able to respond the needs of the user, add more value, and increase higher quality of reference service of academic libraries. This further results in the quality use of information in order to develop knowledge, improve quality of teaching and learning, and promote quality research in academic institutions.
4. Other context can adapt and use the innovative reference service model for academic libraries in Thailand according to user experience and applying the use of service marketing strategy.

References

- Bopp, R.E., & Smith, L.C. (2001). **Reference and information services: an introduction**. Englewood, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited.
- Cassell, K. A., & Hiremath, U. (2011).
- Burke, L. (2008) .Models of Reference Services in Australian Academic Libraries. **Journal of Librarianship and Information Science**, 40.4, 269-86.
- Chaisomphol Chaoprasert. (2013). **Service Marketing**. Bangkok : SE-ED. (In Thai)
- Chowdhury, G.G. et al. (2008). **Librarianship an introduction**. British : Facet publishing.
- Den Hertog, P. (2000). Knowledge-Intensive Business Services as Co-Producers of Innovation. **International Journal of Innovation Management**, 491-528.
- Green, S S. (1876). Personal Relations between Librarians and Readers. **Library Journal**. 1, 74-81.
- Piyawan Siriprasoetsin. (2010). Development of Customer Relationship Management Model for Thai Academic Libraries. Doctor of Philosophy Thesis in Information Studies, Graduate School, Khon Kaen University. (In Thai)
- Praoranuch Prongmaneeikul. (2014). Reference and information service. **Journal of Humanistic Society review**, 16(1), 57-71 (In Thai)
- Rohrer, C. (2014). When to Use Which User-Experience Research Methods. Retrieved 2016, December 24, from <https://goo.gl/uGpp9e>
- Stern, C., (2014). CUBI: A User Experience Model for Project Success. Retrieved 2016, December 24, from <https://goo.gl/NGFWk1>