July 2021

Significance of Social Networking Tools In Promoting The Academic Library Services: A Case Study

Nancy Waral L
Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, India, nancywaral@gmail.com

Dr. P Saravanan Pillai
Lekshmipuram College of Arts & Science Neyyoor, saravanan.ppillai@gmail.com

Dr. G. Gnana Elpinston
Nesamony Memorial Christian College Marthandam, elpin85@gmail.com

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Register No: 19233112272016

Manonmaniam Sundaranar University

Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli

TamilNadu

nancywaral@gmail.com

Dr.P.Saravanan,

Librarian

Library and Information Science

Lekshmipuram College of Arts & Science

Neyyoor

saravanan.ppillai@gmail.com

Dr. G. Gnana Elpinston

Faculty

Department of Economics

Nesamony Memorial Christian College

Marthandam

elpin85@gmail.com

Abstract

The 21st century has witnessed that Social Networking Sites (SNSs) are one of the most dynamic online exercises to impact the advanced world. SNSs and their applications act as a

powerful tool to link the gap between the library and its patrons. The COVID-19 Pandemic has proved that SNSs help in providing library services with the click of a mouse, thus expanding the services the library renders to their clients. The study highlights the use of various SNSs in promoting library services, reasons for using SNSs, to know the most preferred SNS, and frequency of SNSs used by the libraries, and the obstacles faced by the libraries. The data was collected from one hundred and thirty-eight Arts and Science college librarians all over India through an online questionnaire. The majority of the respondents used various SNSs applications in promoting the library services; WhatsApp and library websites are the most preferred SNSs and MySpace was the least preferred SNSs, the respondents agreed that they used SNSs to communicate with their users, to provide quick access, to uplift the library usage and market the library resources, most of the libraries once a week updated the SNSs, a few problems faced such as lack of security, media access, and internet connectivity and none of the respondents responded that they have low skill in using the SNSs for marketing the library resources. The study suggested that library professionals should update the SNSs regularly because of the advanced technologies these sites are the mirror to the library users and they can do further study with innovative technologies adopted by the libraries for the marketing library and information products and services.

Key Words: Social Networking Sites, academic library, library professionals, marketing, library products, resources and services, WhatsApp, library websites, digital information, marketing strategies

Introduction

Libraries are regarded as an efficient storage facility of information, which gathers, preserves, and distributes to those in need. The achievement of any library administrations and its capability in supporting the exploration and learning is characterized by the exact and coordinated data given to its clients. Consequently, spreading such information is done through different media which have the advantage of being easily accessed by clients and interested parties. The present time has witnessed that the people can attain the information globally at their fingertips in any format (Arumugam, 2019).

The social and communication media of our society received a facelift with the advent of SNSs products and services such as YouTube, Blog, Twitter, Word Press, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Facebook, etc. These have a direct influence on numerous features of library and information services; beginning from how we upload/extract information online, to the ways

libraries reaches out to and interact with their clients. SNSs play a dynamic role in every sphere of our lives particularly with Library and Information Science. They serve to enhance various facilities for the library such as services, library outreach, and librarians' teamwork. Many studies have proved that the SNSs are an effective tool in information management and provide ample opportunities, prospects, hope for library users as well as information and library professionals. Implications of these applications in libraries are the most essential method of advertising the library documents, its brand product, and services via the Web. By using these sites libraries can interact with their users and permit them to contribute to the production of library products.

The resourceful use of the various applications of SNSs has been documented to be a fruitful for libraries in promoting systems administration and to improve commitment with their client network. The special attributes of web-based media with high tech "interactive" mix with the "human touch" serve as a significant platform for libraries to give data resources and administrations beyond their actual dividers. In any case, in spite of its far and wide use, a commitment rate via online media is still low among library clients and assessment of web-based media utilization is as yet slippery and scant in the library literature (Shafawi, 2018).

The findings of the studies showed that SNSs could be effectively used to disseminate information and promote interactive professional relationships among librarians and library users as it encourages academic collaboration. SNSs should be introduced to attract users to the library environment and would help to establish a cordial relationship between librarians and patrons; market the library services. In this present era, they are the vibrant tool to promote library products and services. In the present era, the users prefer to access the information using their hand-held devices to connect, organize and share the information. This paper focuses on **the Implications of Social Networking tools in promoting Academic Library Services.** The study also hope to further the understanding of how different Social Networking tools activities of the libraries promote their products and services, user participation in this SNSs used by the libraries. The results of this study highlight the fact that factors like age, gender, qualifications, working experience, and technical skills of LIS professionals have a great impact on using the SNSs for promoting library products and services.

Literature Review

Mumtaz Ali Buriro and Liaquat Ali Rahoo (2018) have undertaken a study on the role of SNSs in improving the libraries and Information Resources and services at University Libraries of Sindh Province. The main purpose of the research was to discover the SNSs used by the Sindh Province University libraries to improve the libraries resources and services, to understand the attitude of the users in using SNSs for promoting the library services, to get the recommendations of the users and to determine the barriers faced by the librarians in using applications of the SNSs in promoting the library services. The study was undertaken by descriptive research method. The sample size was thirty-seven librarians from the Sindh province university libraries. The results of the study revealed that 100% of the librarians use SNSs platforms to promote their library services and they also collected suggestions and feedback from the majority of the users and based on the feedback improved the services in the library. The users strongly recommend that the internet connection in the library should be improved.

Shakeel Ahmad Khan and Rubina Bhatti (2012) conducted a case study in Pakistan about the applications of social media in the marketing of library and information services. The research investigated the various tools of social media for marketing library resources and services and the users' attitude towards the use of social media in the marketing of libraries and information centers. The sample consists of Library and information science school academicians and the librarians working at Islamia University of Bahawalpur and Bahauddin Zakariya University of Multan. The results of the research show that the respondents have a positive prospection towards the resources of the library. All the respondents agreed that the use of social media is essential to obtain the interest of the online users in learning and knowledge sharing. The respondents suggested that the libraries need to use WhatsApp, Blogs, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Wikis so the users will get the library services at their fingertips. The study recommends that the libraries need to build up and improve their digital marketing plans and strategies to expand and improve their services and increase the footprints in the libraries.

Salim Said Alkindi & Mohammed Nasser Al-Suqri (2013) discussed Social Networking Sites as marketing and outreach tools for Library and Information Services. The main goals of this study were to discover the different marketing activities of libraries on Social Networking Sites (SNSs), concentrating on Facebook, as it is acknowledged as a widespread SNS used among libraries. Moreover, the study presents the role of library and information professionals (LIPs) within SNSs, as well as user assistance to the marketing process. Web content is used in a quantitative approach. Twenty public libraries that have Facebook pages

have been selected as subject samples for this study. These libraries were randomly selected by searching on Facebook, using "public library" as a keyword. Then, the study looked at the sampled public libraries' Facebook pages, transferred the insides into categories of activities in a table, and then abridged the marketing activities of the libraries on SNSs and the different roles of LIPs and users. The results of this research were: the investigation found four core activities on library Facebook pages, marketing information services, marketing people knowledge and skills, including marketing the library itself, LIPs have new roles within SNSs and users play an important role in facilitating the library marketing process and Facebook applications are not extensively used currently, while these libraries in enhancing library services. The study finished with references that would help LIP to enrich library marketing by using these applications.

Saee A. Priolkar and Sagar S. Kumbhar (2014) have studied about Use of social networking sites by library professionals in the institute Libraries. This paper focused on awareness, the level of use of SNS by library professionals, their purpose and how SNS are useful to them for improving library services, and the role of SNSs applications in circulating the information to the users. A structured-on line questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaire was emailed to the library professionals. The sample sizes were ten Government institutes with twenty-five library professionals. Some of the findings of the study where the majority of the librarians have regularly used the applications of SNSs in promoting the library services, the main tools used were Facebook, Linked In, Watsapp and Google+. All the librarians have agreed the social networking websites have a larger influence on their profession. All most all the librarians accessed SNSs through mobile devices. The study was narrowed to the use of social networking sites by library professionals in their respective institutes.

Objectives

1. To find out the different SNSs used by the library professionals to market their library products
2. To point out the frequency of the use of SNSs
3. To list out the most preferred SNSs tools
4. To find out the various reasons for using SNSs
5. To know the different digital services provided through SNSs
6. To examine the obstacles faced by the librarians while promoting the services

Methodology

This research is to determine the significance of Social Networking tools in promoting academic library services. An online questionnaire containing ten questions were prepared in Google Form and sent to 184 college librarians all over India. Out of 184 library professionals, 138 of them filled the questionnaire with appropriate data and they were considered as the samples for the study. The sample was selected using the random sampling method. The data was coded in an Excel sheet and analyzed and presented in charts and table forms.
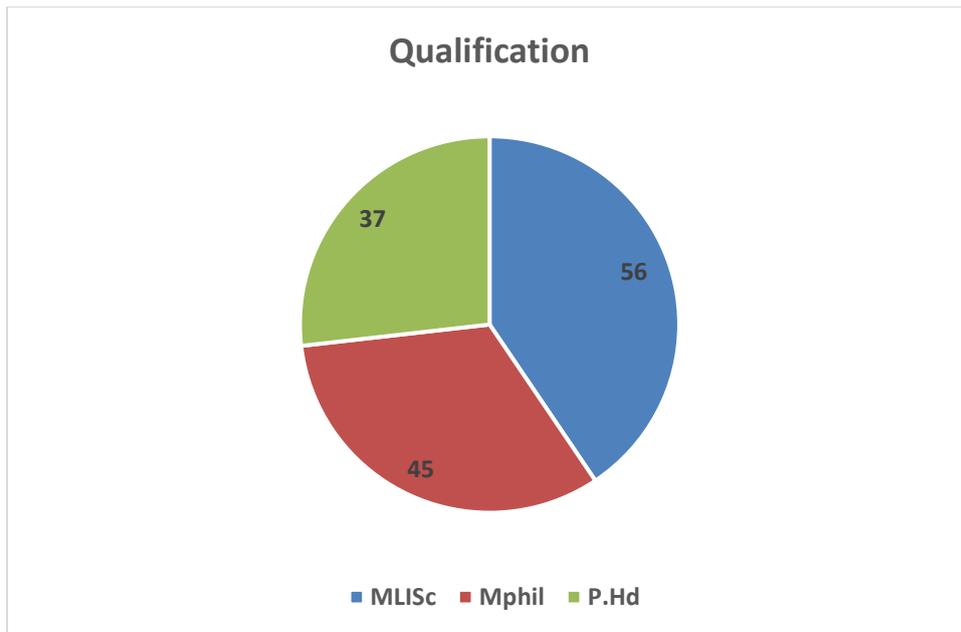
Analysis and Interpretation
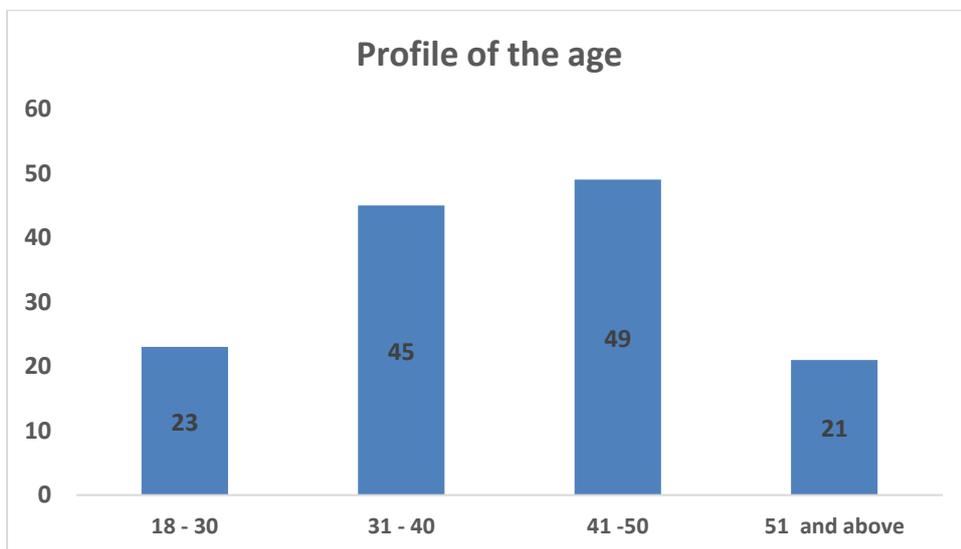
Gender-wise profile of respondents
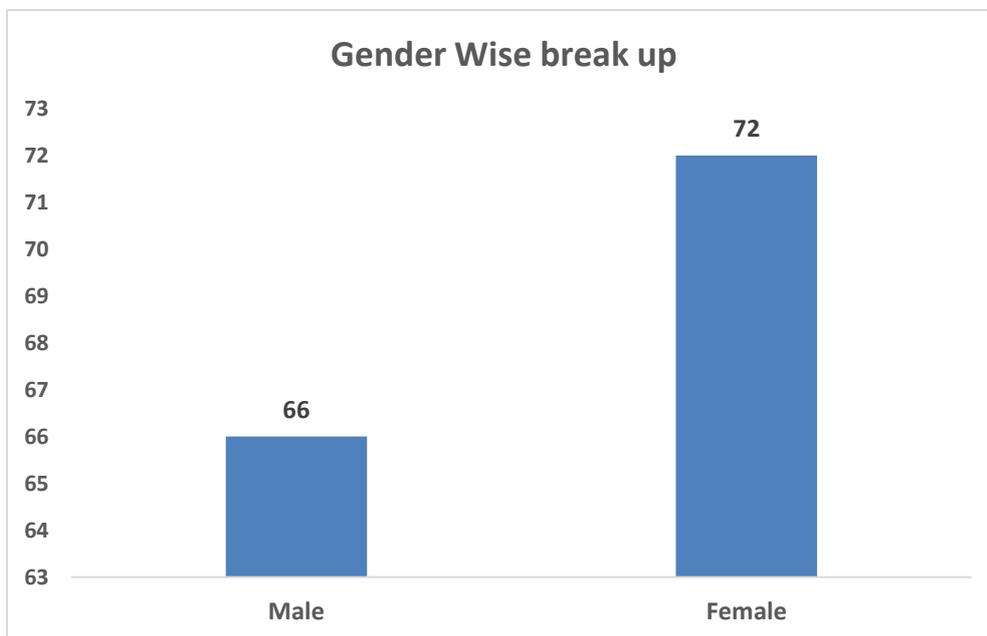
The chart reveals the gender-wise profile of the respondents, out of the total respondents, 52.18 % were female and 47.82% were male.

**Profile of the respondents' qualification**

Qualification

- MLISc - Mphil - P.Hd

The qualification-wise profile is exhibited in the above pie chart, it reveals that 56(40.58 %) of the respondents have completed M.Lisc, 56(32.6%), 45 (32.6%) M.Phil. and 37 of them completed Ph.D.

Age wise profile of respondents

Profile of the age

The age-wise profile presented in a graph reveals that 23(16.67%) of the respondents belong to the age group of 18-30, 45(32.6%) from the age group of 31-40, 49(35.5%) from 41-50, and 21(15.21%) are from 51 and above.

Profile of respondents working experiences

Profile of the working experience
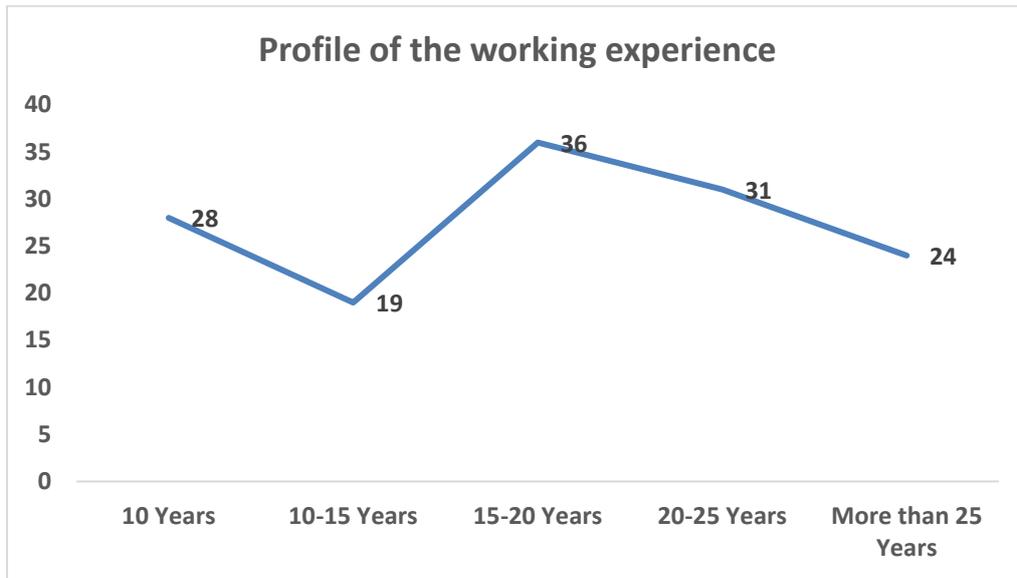
The working experience of the respondents age is displayed in the line chart that is 28 of the respondents have 10 years, 19 of them 10-15, 36 of them 15-20, 31 of them 20-25, and 24 of the them have more than 24 years' experience.

List of Social Networking Sites

| Social Networking Sites	Response	%
Blog	36	26.08
Website	54	39.13
WhatsApp	121	87.68
Telegram	79	57.24
Facebook	67	48.55
LinkedIn	81	58.69
YouTube	47	34.05
MySpace	31	22.46
Twitter	42	30.43
Instagram	61	44.20
WeChat	22	15.94

Hangout	18	13.04

The above table portrays the different Social Networking Sites used by the respondents to market their library products and resources. It was noted that 87.68% used WhatsApp as the main SNSs for the marketing, followed by LinkedIn 58.69, Telegram 57.24, Facebook 48.55% and the least used was Hangout 13.04%.

Most preferred Social Networking Site

Most preferred	Response	%
Facebook	52	37.68
YouTube	39	28.26
Blog	71	51.44
WhatsApp	64	46.37
Twitter	37	26.81
Instagram	41	29.71
MySpace	23	16.66
LinkedIn	35	25.36
Website	89	64.49
Other	5	3.62

The library professionals were asked to list out the most preferred SNSs they use for marketing their services. The table shows the different SNSs used and it is evident that that the library websites 89(64.49%) was the most preferred SNS for marketing followed by Blog 71(51.44%), WhatsApp 64(46.37%), Facebook 52(37.68%), Instagram 41(29.71%), YouTube 39(28.26%), Twitter 37(26.81%), LinkedIn 35(25.36%), MySpace23(16.66%).

Profile of the frequency of updating of Social Networking Sites

Frequency of updation
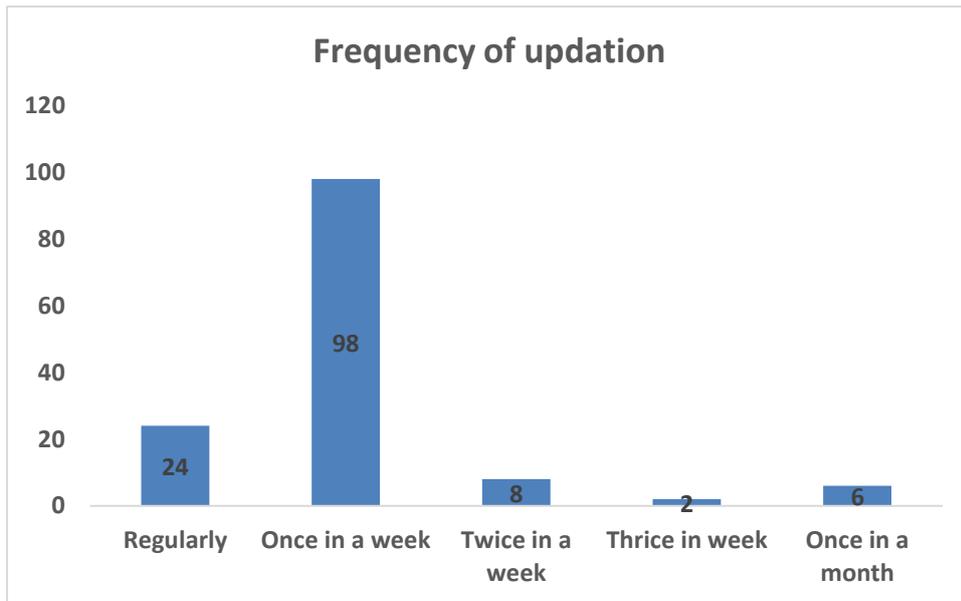
The chart presents how frequently the librarians update the SNSs concerning with marketing the library resources. Out of 138 of the respondents 24 of them regularly updated, followed by 98 who updated SNSs once in a week, 8 twice in a week, 2 thrice in a week, and 6 once in a month.

Rate the services provide by Social Networking in promoting the library resources
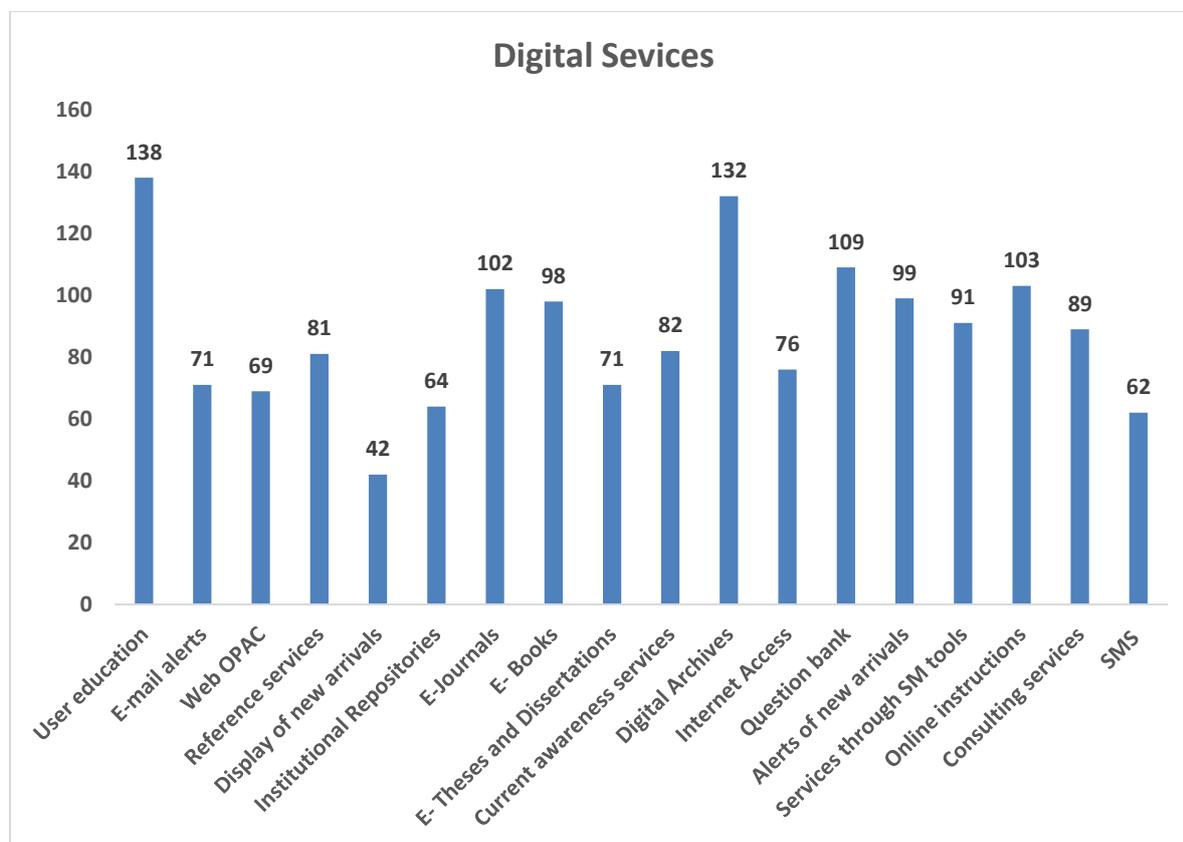
Services

The chart shows the different scales used for rating the services rendered by SNSs in showcasing the library resources. Majority of the respondents agreed that the SNSs provide excellent services, followed by 29 very good, 17 good, 9 fair.

Reasons for using Social Networking Sites

SI. No	Reasons	Response	%
1	To interact with the users	138	100
2	Marketing the library services	138	100
3	Resource sharing	135	97.82
4	Live discussion	127	92.02
5	To get to know the requirements of the user while purchasing the document in the library	98	71.014
6	To display the user statistics	76	55.08
7	To get the feedback from the users	113	81.89
8	To attract new users	102	73.91
9	To update the users with current information of the library	134	97.1
10	Alerts to library events	123	89.13
11	It gives a communitarian workplace	81	58.69
12	To increase the library usage	138	100
13	To express users' suggestions	92	66.67
14	Quick response	138	100

The table highlights the various reasons for using SNSs in marketing library products and services. All the respondents agreed that they used SNSs to market because they are the best tool to interact with the users, marketing the library products and resources, promote the library usage and providing quick responses. 135 agreed they are very useful for resource sharing, followed by 127 for live discussions, 98 to get to know the requirements of the user while purchasing the document in the library, 76 to display the user statistics, 113 for assistance in collecting user feedback, 102 to attract the new user to access the resources from

the library, 134 to update the users with current information of the library, 123 for alerting the library news,81as it assists to work as a community,92 as a platform to express the suggestion.

Digital Sevices

The libraries use the different SNSs to provide different services, all the respondents agreed that user education was given through using different SNSs, most of the respondents rendered various services like e-mail, Web OPAC, digital archives, alerts of new arrivals, e-books, e-journals, a question bank, SMS alerts and consulting services.

SI.NO	Obstacles	Response	%
1	Internet Connectivity	63	45.65
2	Lack of visibility	46	33.33
3	Lack of Media access	59	42.75
4	Inadequate funds	102	73.91
5	Lack of professional skills	89	64.49

6	Lack of training opportunities	71	51.44
7	Lack of security	126	91.3
8	Lack of manpower	56	40.58
9	Power cut	72	52.17
10	Lack of library budget	102	73.91
11	Lack of users in the library	81	58.69
12	Technical revolution	56	40.57
13	Escalating the E-resources	103	74.63
14	Cost of documents	122	88.4

The table displays the various problem faced by the library professionals, majority of the respondents that is 126(91.3%) faced lack of security, followed by 63(45.65%) internet connectivity, 89(64.49%) lack of professional skills, 81(58.69%) a lack of library budget and 122(88.4%) cost of documents.
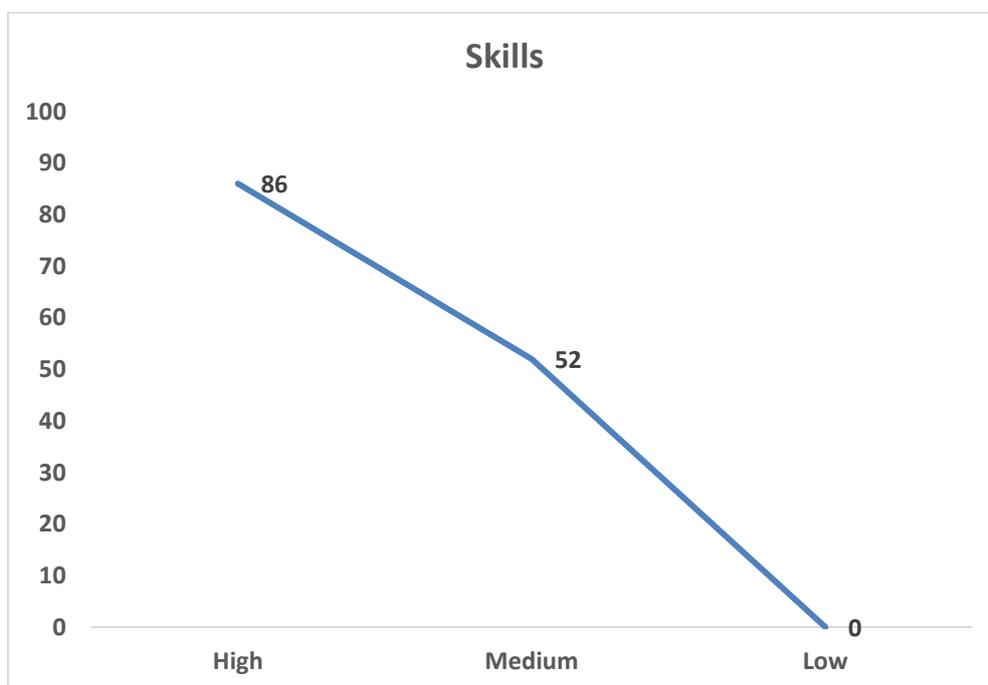
The respondents were asked to rate their skill in promoting library services using SNSs, out of 138 respondents, 86 of them agreed that they have high skill, followed by 52 who said they have medium skill.

Findings of the study

1. Out of 138 respondents 66 of them were male and 72 female
2. Only 24 of the respondents have more than 25 years of working experiences
3. Out of 138 respondents, 37 of them completed the doctorate in library and Information Science
4. Half of the sample size belong to the age group of 41-50
5. Among various SNSs WhatsApp was the most frequently used SNS by most of the library professionals, and Hangout was the least SNS.
6. Out of 138 respondents, 34 of them updated the SNSs daily and129 once a week and no one said they would do it once in a month and rarely
7. The respondents opined that the most preferred SNSs they used for marketing were library websites and the least was MySpace.
8. Most of the libraries once a week updated the SNSs for promoting the library services and only 6 of the respondents agreed they updated only once a month.
9. All the respondents agreed that they used SNSs to communicate with their users, to provide quick access, to uplift the library use age and to market the library resources.
10. The libraries provided various digital services like Web OPAC, institution repository, digital achieve, alerts to new arrivals
11. All the libraries provide user education through WhatsApp, Blog, Twitter, Youtube and Instagram.
12. Majority of the respondents faced the problems like deficiency of budget, increasing the cost of documents both print as well as e-resources, lack of funds, technical issues and lack of media access.
13. Majority of the respondents have the opinion that they have high skills in operating the SNSs
14. None of the respondents responded that they have low skill in using the SNSs for marketing the library resources
15. All the respondents have accepted that the social networking websites has greater impact on their profession

Suggestions

- All the library professionals should use latest updates of SNSs applications to promote the library services.
- The libraries should educate the users about the importance of SNSs in showcasing the library services.
- The libraries should try to update the SNSs regularly because of the advanced technologies these sites are the mirror to the library users.
- The librarians can do further study with innovative technologies adopted by the libraries for the marketing library and information products and services.
- Trainings should be given to librarians about social media usage as it can play an important role in the use of libraries services.
- Library web site should manage social media page for admission in MLIS
- Adequate knowledge about different computer applications should be compulsory

Conclusion

The research portrays that the library professionals were positively inclined towards using the SNSs for marketing the library products and services. The majority of the librarians maximum used various SNSs to make uses aware of the library holdings moreover, most of them have the technical skills to updates these sites. From the study, it was clear that the library professionals are aware of the latest technologies and they use in the field of marketing the products and resources in the librarians. These SNSs play a prime role in the students' notify and attain the current information and they assist them to distribute to their friends, these sites keep a good rapport with the librarians and the users. Nowadays we cannot imagine a library that is not connected to Social Networking Sites and thus understanding the role being played by SNS, the modern day libraries should adopt this latest technology for instant communication between the library and user. Like every other technology, the SNSs also have demerits but reaching out to the customers and expanding customer/user base is more important in today's internet age. Therefore, it is suggested that every library should adopt this modern way of communication to reach the larger population.

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