

# Users' Perception on the Application of Social Media in Library Marketing – A Study of Pondicherry University

*Abdul Baquee*

*R Sevukan*

## Abstract

*In the age of information explosion, social media are the important tools that occupy a vast area in human life to communicate with nearest to farthest one. The use of social media is increasing staggeringly day by day in all walks of life. Academicians including students are not exceptional. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to know the users' perception on the use of social media for marketing of library services at Pondicherry University. The study employed an online quantitative survey method. The semi-structured questionnaires were distributed using google forms among the students of Pondicherry University. One hundred and forty-six responses were received and analyzed. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents was of the opinion that social media as effective tool for promoting library products and services; more than 80 percent of the users (120 respondents) expressed desire to have the news regarding Library/University events/ program, sessions, etc. on social media while 75.34 percent required 'New Arrivals' (New collection of the library) and interestingly only 68 (46.57%) users shared that they would like to see social media tools as reference service for users' query.*

**Keywords:** India, Library Marketing, Library on Social Media, Pondicherry University, Social Media, Web 2.0

## 1. Introduction

Ever since the advent of social media, it has become the closest and faithful friend of humans. Today we are living in an era where time has become a prime factor for every entity. Everybody wants to accomplish his/her work within a very limited span. Simultaneously, we also live in an information society where information plays a vital role and to transfer the same we use different media. Among various media, given its reach and popularity, social media remains as the first choice. Library in an ICT (information communication technology) driven era

is any information center where information is produced, processed and shared with the respective clients. The fourth law of library science as given by S.R. Ranganathan, "Save the time of the reader" advocates that library professionals should provide services in the shortest possible timeframe. Libraries over the years have been adopting emerging information communication technology (ICT) and related tools to meet the changing demands of the users and at the same time libraries are also using social media tools to reach out and communicate with their patrons. Today the most used social media tools include Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, WeChat, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, Hangouts, Hike, Instant messaging, LinkedIn, Skype and many more.



### Social Media – Conceptual Framework

A simple definition has been taken from the Oxford Dictionary as "...Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in Social Networking" (Chandler & Munday, 2016). One of the renowned authors in the domain of social media, Solis (2010) defines "social media is the democratization of information, transforming people from content readers into publishers. It is the shift from a broadcast mechanism, one-to-many, to a many-to-many model, rooted in conversations between authors, people, and peers" (p.37). On the basis of aforesaid definitions is that social media is an internet based communication tool that is used to reach out, communicate, share or exchange of information from one to another irrespective of geographical locations and time.

### Use Of Social Media

Nowadays, there is a craze of using social media and a large chunk of population, especially youth, are so keen to use social media services for free or pay modes. Different reports and statistics shows the growth rate of using social media is on steep rise around the world. According to statistics (Fig. 1) of the most used social media by active users till Oct, 2018 compiled by 'Statista (2019) using data from the Global Web Index' that Facebook has nearly 2234 million active monthly users while YouTube is used by 1900 million, followed by WhatsApp with 1500 million, Facebook Messenger with 1300 million while twitter has 335 million active users per month (Smart Insights, 2019).

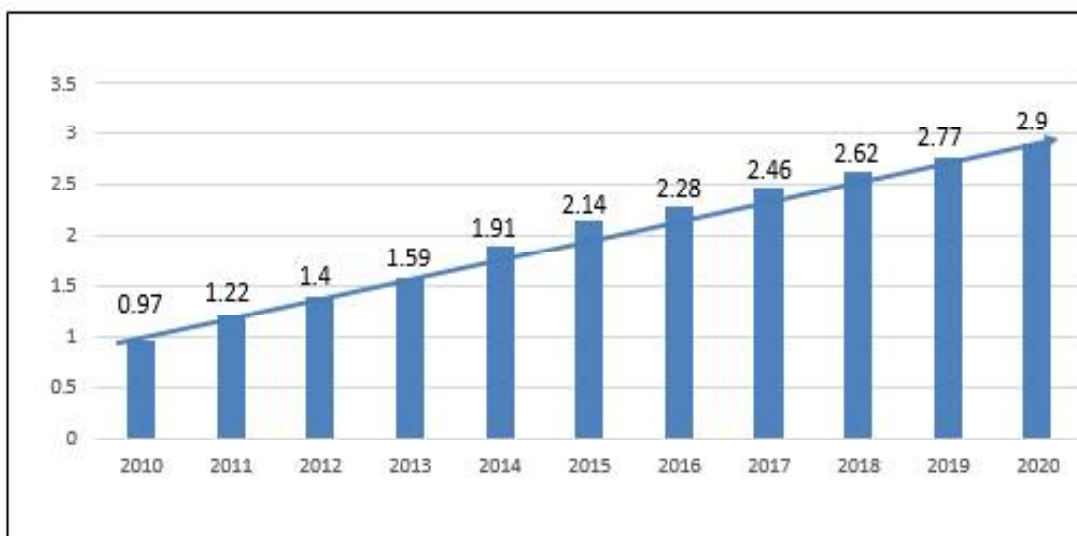


Fig 1: Worldwide growth rate of social media users from 2010 to 2020 in billions (Statista, 2019)

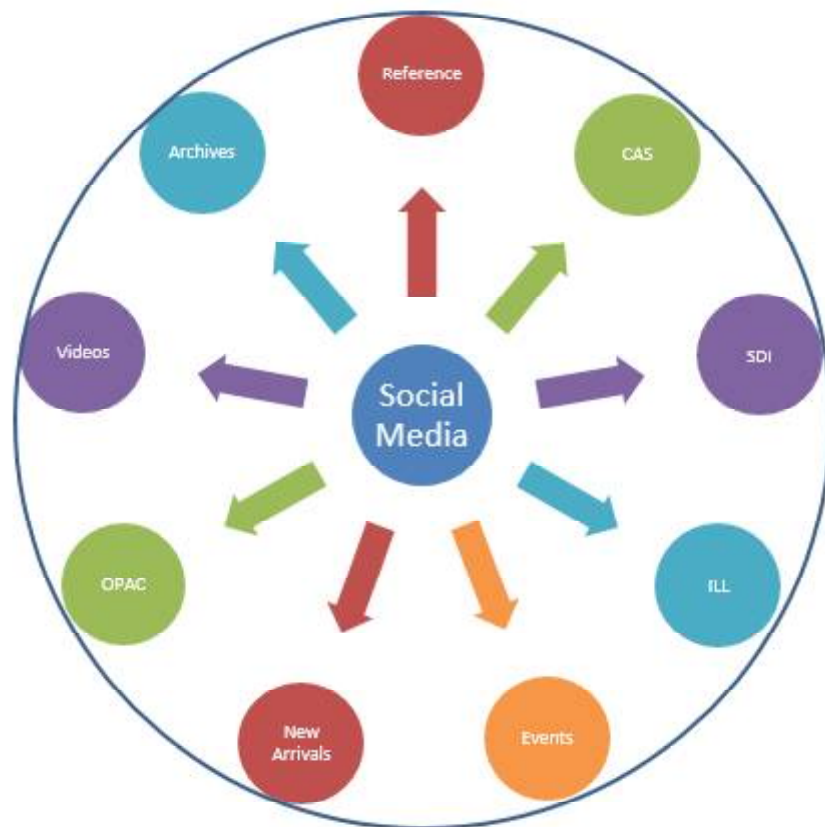
### Social Media And Libraries

Library and Information centers are using social media for multiple purposes: marketing, branding,

and building up customer relationships, reference services, current awareness service, and quick dissemination of news. Social media have been used

by the libraries in order to fulfill various purposes like; building up library community, marketize the library services and resources, to save the time, to reduce the cost, to provide quick and easy reference service, and to construct positive user-library relationship. This study is mainly focused on the marketing of library services and products through social media tools. Though, “Librarians and

information professionals constantly debate and recognize the importance of marketing and have come up with new strategies to market their services and products. Traditionally, marketing was primarily done to promote information services and other resources in order to ensure their optimum usage. Today technology has endowed information seekers with varied options to satisfy their information needs”(Jain, 2014).



**Fig. 2: Framework of Social Media in Library**

### Literature Review

The study of Khan and Bhatti (2012) revealed in their survey of different libraries in Pakistan that the attitude of the respondents was formative and lion's share of the respondents were in favour of Social Media use and also found that social media is a very significant tool for marketing the library and its products. The study identified a few constraints in marketing of library services through Social Media such as lack of proper training, dearth of proper knowledge, slow speed of internet and insufficient supply of electricity. Alkindi and Al-Suqri (2013) in their study based on the Facebook pages of twenty (20) public libraries of USA and Canada found that libraries use social media tools for marketing different aspects of library which include; marketing of library itself, marketing of library resources and services and marketing of library professionals' skills and knowledge. Furthermore, the study revealed that in present times libraries do not use Facebook excessively to provide the services. However, the authors argued that using social media tools would help increasing the marketing of library services and resources by the professionals. The study of Amina and Nwanne (2015) pointed out from their research, which was carried out in the universities in South-South Nigeria where privacy was the most concerning matter for promoting library resources and services using social media. Lack of enough funds, techno-skill, and unawareness, and network problems were also found to be the associated problems in using social media for promoting library services. It also showed two-way communication is done in Library by the service provider and users with the help of social media. Further, Islam and Habiba (2015) bring out in their research work that majority of the libraries in

Bangladesh use social media to publicize the library news and events, to make video conferencing and for library resources and services marketing too and found the growth rate and using of social media is going at a rapid speed. Al-Awadhi and Al-Daihani (2018) found that a large portion of the respondents did not use social media tools in the libraries, however, the most preferable social media for marketing of libraries are Twitter, Instagram Facebook, YouTube, Researchgate, Blogs, and Librarything respectively thereby signifying the positive correlation between the use of social media and the marketing of library. The public libraries primarily use Facebook for sharing the events both present and past and very often the libraries use Facebook to share the opening hours, rules and regulations, holidays, etc. (Joo, Choi, & Baek, 2018). Rachman and Putri (2018) stated that the libraries in Indonesia are using social media mainly for promoting their resources, facilities and products and Facebook tops the list for promoting or marketing the library while some constraints like unavailability of manpower and lack of time were shown by them in using the social media tools in libraries.

### Objectives of The Study

The main objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To assess the library use pattern of the students in Pondicherry University;
2. To identify the preferred social media tools by the respondents and seek their suggested social medial tools for the library;
3. To analyse the time spent on using social media tools by the respondents;
4. To ascertain the opinion of the respondents on why the libraries need to use social media; and

5. To study the perception of the respondents on the kinds of library news/services to be promoted through social media.

### Methodology

For the present study, the quantitative survey method was adopted taking a sample size of 146 using google form among the students of Pondicherry University. The data were collected through a structured questionnaire. Five-point Likert's (attitude test) scale was used to measure the users' attitudes. Data were analyzed and tabulated with Microsoft Office for interpreting the data.

### Results and Discussion

The survey was conducted using google form with 146 valid responses among the students of Pondicherry University. Hence, each analysis has been done based on the 146 responses.

### Library Use Pattern

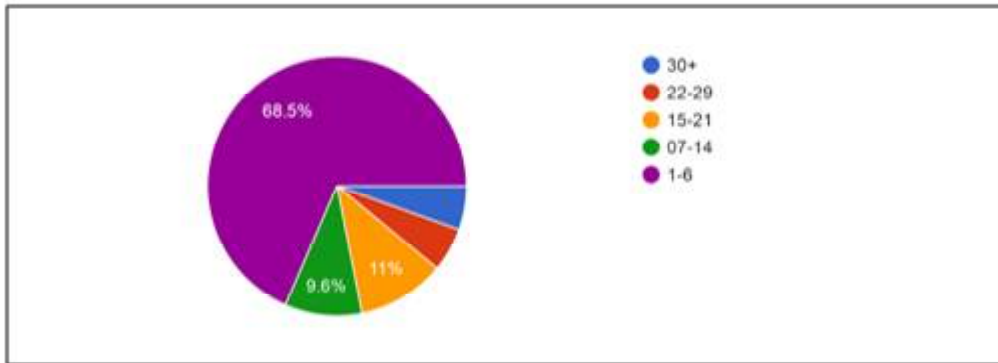
As part of Objective 1 of the study, an attempt was made to analyze the library use behavior of the users of Pondicherry University in order to understand the extent of utilization of the library resources which then leads to assess their perception on the use of

social media tools for marketing library resources. The assessment was done based on the three parameters namely the purpose of visiting the library, frequency of visiting the library, and time spent in the library. The results are presented in the following sections:

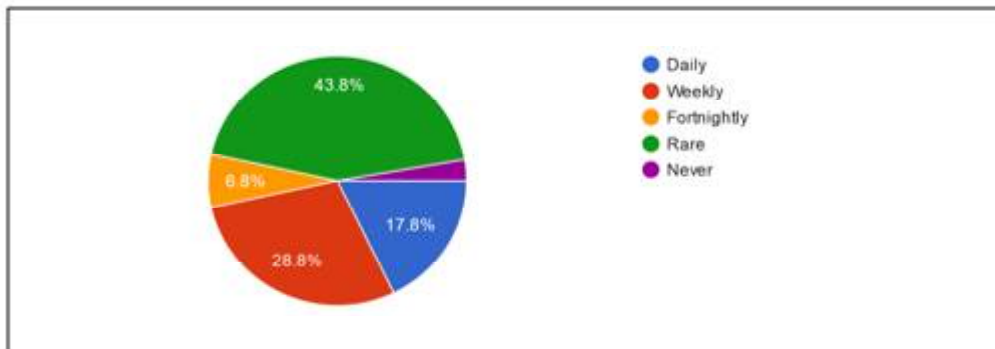
Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents (83.56%) visited the library for reading purpose followed by new arrivals checking (26.02%), for check-in and check-out (22.6%), OPAC/Catalogue searching (19.17%), and for Discussion (15.06%). It is quite encouraging that majority of the students preferred to use the library for the purpose of reading while the least number of users preferred the library for discussion. As far as the time spent by the students of Pondicherry University for the above-mentioned reasons is concerned, it was found that 68.5 percent of the users spent 1 – 6 hours a week followed by 15 – 21 hours, 7 – 14 hours, 22 – 29 hours, and more than 30 hours (Fig. 3). On the other hand, as indicated in Fig. 4, 43.18 percent of the respondents visited the library 'Rarely'. A meager percentage (2.8%) of the respondents revealed that they never visited the library. However, it is interesting that more than 50 percent of the respondents visited the library daily, weekly, and fortnightly.

**Table 1: Purpose of visiting the library**

Sl. No.	Purpose	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Reading	122	83.56
2	Discussion	22	15.06
3	OPAC/Catalogue searching	28	19.17
4	New arrivals checking	38	26.02
5	Others (Including Issue-return)	33	22.60



**Fig. 3: Time spent in the library on weekly basis (in hours)**



**Fig. 4: Frequency of visiting the library**

#### Preferred Social Media Tools

As shown in Table 2, analysis of the preferred social media tools used by the respondents revealed that out of 146 respondents, 68 of them sharing 93.1 percent preferred WhatsApp. YouTube was found to be the second preferred tool with 87.6 percent response followed by Facebook (76.7%), Twitter (21.9%), and Others (20.5%). Moreover, it was attempted to seek the opinion of the respondents to suggest suitable social media tool(s) which can be implemented in libraries. As can be seen in Table 3, WhatsApp was suggested by 88 respondents which

comes to 60.27 percent of the total respondents. The other suggested tools are Facebook (56.16%), YouTube (32.87%), Twitter (13.69%), and Others (8.21%). It is crystal clear that the majority of the respondents opined that WhatsApp could be an effective tool to marketize the library products and services for their optimum utilization by the stakeholders.

**Table 2: Social media tools preferred by the respondents**

Sl. No.	Social Media Tool	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Facebook	56	76.7
2	WhatsApp	68	93.1
3	YouTube	64	87.6
4	Twitter	16	21.9
5	Others	15	20.5

**Table 3: Social media tools suggested by the respondents for the library**

Sl. No.	Social Media	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Facebook	82	56.16
2	Twitter	20	13.69
3	YouTube	48	32.87
4	WhatsApp	88	60.27
5	Others	12	8.21

**Time Spent on Social Media**

Table 4 presents the result of time spent daily by the respondents on the use of social media tools. It was observed that 34 respondents recording 23.29 percent spent less than four hours a day while 22.6

percent of them spent 1-2 hours daily; 19.18 percent spent 3-4 hours a day; 17.81 percent of them spent 2-3 hours, and 17.12 percent of the respondents spent less than 1 hour daily. Therefore, it is clear that more than 80 percent of the respondents spent at least one hour on social media.

**Table 4: Time spent on the use of social media daily (in hours)**

Sl. No.	Duration(hours)	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	<4	34	23.29
2	3-4	28	19.18
3	2-3	26	17.81
4	1-2	33	22.60
5	>1	25	17.12
Total		146	100.00

### Need of social media for libraries

A question was posed to the respondents on the opinion of why social media are needed for the libraries. The opinions of the respondents, as recorded in the questionnaire, are presented below:

- ❖ To save the time of the users by breaking the physical barrier of the traditional library.
- ❖ It will help in better dissemination of information which will let users know about the library-related information like new arrivals, opening and closing time, university or library events, and new services or facility especially for those who are not too much interested about the library, in fact, it may create interest among them.
- ❖ It will help reach out to the wider user community within no time irrespective of time and place. It will also become very useful in order to advertise the library quite widely.
- ❖ If library informs library-related news through social media, it will influence the students and may create a curiosity to visit the library and that will help make a habit of visiting the library on a daily basis since most of the students are using social media.
- ❖ It will create a healthy relationship between the library staff and users; and
- ❖ The contrary to the above suggestions one suggestion has been found here which is pertinent to state here that it is not required. A website or portal that can be accessed from within the university to know any information is enough.

### Kind of information about library on social media

An analysis was done to understand the need of the respondents to know about what kind of

information about the library resources and services they need. From Table 5, it was interestingly noticed that 82.19 percent of the total respondents were in need of news about the Library/University on social media while 75.34 of them revealed that they need information on newly added library collection; 68 (46.57%) respondents required information about reference service; and 52(35.61%) respondents were in need of library timings/rules. Contrarily, 11.64 percent of the respondents wanted information about the library on other information other than the above-mentioned items.

**Table 5: Kind of information about library required by the respondents through social media**

Sl. No.	Library News	No. of Respondents (N=146)	Percentage (%)
1	Library/University News	120	82.19
2	New collection of Library	110	75.34
3	Reference Service	68	46.57
4	Library Timing/Rules	52	35.61
5	Others	17	11.64

### Findings and Conclusion

This study is considered as a worth study which has a lot of significance. This study lets us know the users' opinions towards the use of social media in the library for its marketing. This study also adds some extent of empirical knowledge on this area irrespective of its findings. This research explores what the students of Pondicherry University think about the social media as a tool for providing library information to the users. It is also apparent to mention here that the users accept social media as one of the library service provider tools. This study shows the well acceptance of social media among the young community which supports the study



(Jain 2013). This paper concludes by stating that social media has a glowing time in the very near future in the library. Hence library staff should include these as an important library tool and eventually, library should take initiatives to create awareness among the users and provide training to its staff on the use of social media in libraries.

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### About Author

**Abdul Baquee**, Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science, Pondicherry University, Puducherry- 605014, India  
Email: [imabaquee@gmail.com](mailto:imabaquee@gmail.com)

**R Sevukan**, Associate Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, Pondicherry University, Puducherry- 605014, India  
Email: [sevukan2002@yahoo.com](mailto:sevukan2002@yahoo.com)

