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# Promoting Interlibrary Loan Services Through Social-Media: A Case Study at Zayed University Library

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## Abstract

The interlibrary loan (ILL) service significantly enhances access to information resources by bridging gaps in institutional organizations. This study investigates the promotion of ILL services at Zayed University Library, United Arab Emirates, through social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. Employing a structured questionnaire, the research assessed the awareness, utilization, and satisfaction levels of Faculty, staff, and students regarding ILL services. Preliminary findings revealed limited awareness among users, with social media emerging as a potential marketing tool to increase engagement. The study highlights the strategic use of social media to foster awareness, strengthen service delivery, and improve user satisfaction. Recommendations are provided for leveraging social media to enhance ILL services, ensuring accessibility and efficiency within academic libraries. Interlibrary loan (ILL) is a great service increases user access to library resources. So, to improve this service and increase user satisfaction, Zayed University Library supported of collaboration among the Interlibrary Loan.

**Keywords:** Interlibrary Loan, (ILL), Academic library, Documents delivery, Documents sharing, social media

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## 1. Introduction

Access to information is the backbone of academic success, yet many researchers and students often encounter challenges in locating materials unavailable in their institutional libraries (1, 2). Interlibrary loan (ILL) services meet this need by providing patrons with access to documents residing in other libraries, supplementing academic work (3). The impartial of ILL service is to build closer cooperation between libraries and bring all communities of the world together to facilitate the exchanging of ideas and wisdom (4). Despite the prominent importance of ILL services, they are often inappreciably used because of the lack of appreciation and the weak promotion of their importance (5, 6). It is to this backdrop that new approaches to raising the profile of ILL and increasing utilization of services needs to be devised. While substantial literature review is focused on analyzing the effectiveness of ILL services in terms of operation performance (7), relatively limited amount of works is dedicated to the use of Digital Marketing Tools (8), including social media in promotion of ILL in the realm of academic institutions (9). This gap is especially evident

in the case of Middle East and that libraries are now incorporating the use of technology in compliance with the international standards (10). Thus, Zayed University Library situated in Abu Dhabi and Dubai campuses offers a perfect context to explore how the gap in awareness of ILL services can be closed using social media presence in order to extend the range of a diverse academic community. Social networking and social media have become critical and revolutionary features in different academic platforms through which interaction is made easier through services like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube (11). Such tools enable people to communicate and share knowledge, new ideas, products and services, collaborate and transform – allowing the rise of innovative virtual communities (12, 13). To academic institutions, social media is an unbounded marketing tool for services, interacting with the users, and branding (14, 15). Understanding this possibility, the Zayed University Library uses Instagram and YouTube intentionally to fulfill the given goals, especially regarding the promotion of the crucial library services such as the Interlibrary Loan (ILL). Furthermore, the ILL service provision at Zayed University

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Library enhances the research and academic activities of Faculty, students and staff across Zayed University's campuses in Abu Dhabi, and Dubai. In this respect, the ILL service plays a critical role of providing physical and electronic resources which are beyond the university collection in light of bridging information gaps as well as increasing academic output. Yet, to ensure the best results and high demand in ILL, the effective marketing tools are needed to promote the service and prove its efficiency (15). The relevance of this research stems from the possibility to establish the way social media service has created change to libraries. Apart from creating the awareness, the platform like Instagram and YouTube can be used to improve engagement with library users (16, 17). In essence, this research assists in the pursuit of knowledge on the incorporation of social media into library outreach programs thus provide a relevant model to other learning institution that aims at making their communication cord more modern.

## 2. Research Questions

The objectives of this study are to evaluate the awareness levels of the members of the ZU community about ILL services offered in the university. Furthermore, it aims to evaluate the use of the various social media platforms in enhancing the delivery of the ILL services; and to give functional recommendations. The study addresses the following research questions:

- Identifying the existing level of awareness of ILL services in the ZU community and to develop and expand this particular concept among students and members of the ZU faculty.
- The usefulness of social media networks, for instance, Instagram and YouTube in enhancing the use of ILL services.
- What strategies can be implemented to enhance the visibility and utilization of ILL services in academic libraries?

## 3. Literature Review

**Interlibrary Loan Services: Enhancing Access to Resources**

Interlibrary Loan (ILL) services have long been regarded as vital for bridging the gaps in institutional collections, providing access to resources otherwise unavailable to library patrons (7). These services play a critical role in supplementing the academic and research endeavors of

Faculty, students, and staff by enabling access to physical and digital materials from external libraries. Mensah & Dadzie emphasize that ILL services foster collaboration and knowledge exchange among academic institutions, contributing to a global community of shared resources (18). Despite their importance, ILL services often suffer from underutilization due to limited awareness and inadequate promotion (19)

### *Challenges in Promoting ILL Services*

Several studies highlight the challenges academic libraries face in promoting ILL services. A lack of targeted marketing and ineffective communication channels has resulted in low awareness levels among users (7). Research indicates that many users are unaware of the existence or value of ILL services, often relying on alternative sources such as ResearchGate or direct author requests (14). Moreover, the complexity of ILL procedures, including form submission and delivery timelines, deters potential users from utilizing these services (15)

### *Regional Context: Academic Libraries in the Middle East*

The integration of social media in promoting academic library services is relatively nascent in the Middle East (20). Vetruba and Faust (2024) note that while libraries in the region are increasingly adopting digital marketing tools, there remains a significant gap in their utilization compared to Western institutions (10). Zayed University Library, serving a diverse academic community in the United Arab Emirates, provides a valuable case study for examining the impact of social media on ILL promotion. The library's efforts to use Instagram and YouTube reflect a growing trend among Middle Eastern academic libraries to modernize their communication strategies and align with global standards (2, 21)

### *The Role of Social Media in Academic Library Promotion*

Social media platforms, including ILL, have emerged as transformative tools for academic libraries to market their services. Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter enable libraries to engage with patrons in real time, share updates, and provide tutorials (11). Research by Williams (2023) demonstrates that social media can significantly enhance user awareness and engagement when employed strategically (9). Similarly, Akintola (2021) highlights that social media fosters virtual communities where knowledge-sharing and collaborative

learning thrive, making it an ideal medium for promoting library services (12).

Studies specifically focusing on ILL service promotion via social media are limited but growing. Duffin (2020) found that libraries utilizing YouTube for tutorial videos experienced higher engagement rates and increased service utilization (13). Similarly, Rahman (2023) reported that Instagram's visual and interactive features, such as hashtags and stories, effectively captured user attention and communicated the value of library services (8). These findings align with Esan and Unuabor (2024), who advocate for integrating social media into library outreach programs to reach a broader audience and build stronger user relationships (16).

### ***Gaps in the Literature***

While substantial literature and focus has been directed towards ILL services and how effectively they function but there has been little research done in relation to social media and ILL promotion especially in the Middle Eastern countries. Furthermore, there is no research-based information available that speaks of a certain social media tool to increase user awareness, interest and satisfaction with the ILL access services. Filling these gaps is critical to inform specific initiatives for enhancing the quality-of-service delivery as well as utilization of social media web resources in academic libraries.

The review of literature makes it clear that ILL services remain essential in academic libraries and points at social media marketing as a possible means of increasing its usage. However, limited awareness and engagement challenges persist, particularly in the Middle Eastern context. This study seeks to bridge these gaps by investigating the effectiveness of Instagram and YouTube in promoting ILL services at Zayed University Library, providing valuable insights and practical recommendations for academic libraries globally.

## **4. Institutional Profile**

Zayed University Library serves their community of approximately 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students. The University offers 8 undergraduate and 5 graduate Colleges. Zayed University is a semi-governmental, Zayed University located in United Arab Emirates in two campuses (Abu Dhabi and Dubai), Zayed University Library and Learning Commons provides excellent services, access, and collections to support the

curriculum and the research needs of the ZU community. The Interlibrary loan service is managed by the ILL Coordinator (Assistant Director/ Public Services) and employs an additional full-time staff member divided in between the both campuses. Interlibrary loan section uses ILL form to be send via ILL email for management ILL requests. ILL and Circulation are a part of the Circulation Services unit, which is in the Operations Group at the library (22).

### ***Social Media Usage to Advertise Promotion of Interlibrary Loan at Zayed University Library***

Social media platforms are used at Zayed University Library as reference transactions, receiving/resolving issues, building strong relationships, promoting the service, disseminating news quickly, and delivering the information directly to library users (23). The following are some social media platforms that Zayed University library staff use to promote ILL.

#### ***Video Tutorial/YouTube***

In order to promote Interlibrary loan service to the Zayed University community creates and video tutorial and posts it on the (YouTube) page of the Zayed University Library channel. It is an effective video that focuses on how to request materials not available in Zayed University Library through the Interlibrary loan service. This video demonstrates how this service can enhance the researcher's works on their research papers more easily and resources available (21).

#### ***Powerpoint Presentations***

Every year, Zayed University organizes an event for new Faculty and students called "New Faculty Orientation" and New Students' Orientation," both graduate and undergraduate. So, the library has a contribution with other departments to present their services to the Zayed University community (24). A slider focused on the ILL service was shown at the event to support the interaction, address or discuss the ILL services to provide the Faculty and students with information regarding ILL services. These presentations can offer additional information and make the presentation more active and interesting.

#### ***Instagram***

Instagram has become a culturally significant platform, with cell phones serving as the primary means

for accessing it and other social media tools. The strategic use of hashtags in videos and social media posts proves highly effective in promoting the Interlibrary Loan (ILL) service, as it increases visibility and makes it easier for Zayed University patrons and others to locate relevant services (21). Sifting through engaging content about the ILL service while assuring patrons that the service can secure materials missing from the Zayed University Library creates better user enlightenment and builds more trust in the service's performance abilities.

### ***Brochures, Flyers***

Zayed University uses flyers and brochures to promote ILL service for linking with both incoming and established patrons. These methods successfully supported the ILL service while generating excellent understanding of the ILL system through various university departments (24). Social media platforms function much like conventional marketing tools by engaging researchers through attention capture and quickly disseminating ILL information to boost overall awareness.

## **5. Research Methodology**

This study uses both quantitative and qualitative research design to assess the viability of the social media tools: Instagram and You Tube in communicating. Interlibrary Loan (ILL) services at Zayed University Library. The study adopts a case study research design. being centered on the activities of the library in the social media and the extent to which they influence the awareness and utilization of the library's services among the target population satisfaction with ILL services among students, Faculty, and staff.

### ***Sampling***

A stratified random sampling method was adopted to ensure representation from different demographics within Zayed University (25). The sample consists of Faculty, staff, and students from the Abu Dhabi and Dubai campuses. Based on the university's population size, approximately 176 participants completed the survey, representing various academic departments and user categories. This sample ensures balanced representation across gender, academic discipline, and role within the university.

### ***Questionnaire Development***

A structured online survey comprising 13 questions was tailored to gain Zayed University community satisfaction about Interlibrary Loan service. Online survey tool was created with the approval of ISC (Institutional Survey Committee) at Zayed University for distribution among ZU community.

### ***Data Collection***

A structured online survey was distributed through Zayed University's announcement system. The survey assessed participants' awareness, utilization, and satisfaction with ILL services and their perceptions of social media's effectiveness in promoting these services. Data from the university library's Instagram and YouTube accounts, including engagement rates, views, likes, and comments on ILL-related content, were analyzed to assess user interactions. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted with a subset of participants to gather qualitative insights about the user experience and suggestions for improvement.

### ***Data Analysis***

The survey responses were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics through SPSS software. Frequency distributions and cross-tabulations were used to identify trends, while regression analysis examined the relationship between social media engagement and ILL service awareness/utilization. Responses from interviews and focus groups were transcribed and analyzed thematically to identify key themes, patterns, and user recommendations. NVivo software supported the qualitative analysis process (26). Engagement data from Instagram and YouTube were analyzed to measure the reach and effectiveness of the ILL promotional campaigns. Comparative analysis identified patterns of user interaction with different content formats (e.g., videos, posts) (27).

### ***Ethical Considerations***

This research follows ethics protocol properly, as all the participants were given explanation on the aim and process of the study, and the measures that were in place to ensure their anonymity before they agreed to participate in the study. The information collected was aggregated; participant identity was not revealed. Participant identities were not disclosed in any publication or presentation of the findings. Ethical clearance was obtained from Zayed University's Institutional Survey Committee (ISC) prior to

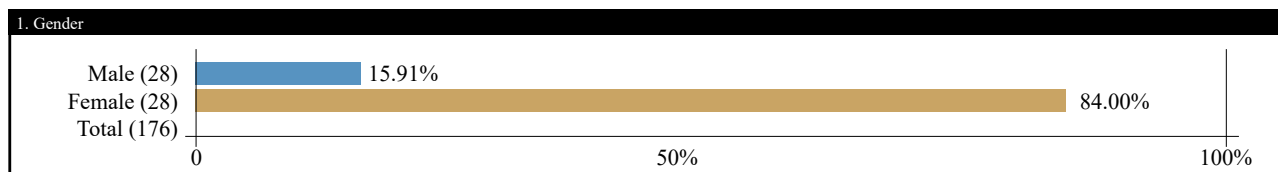
survey distribution and data collection. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any repercussions. This methodology ensures robust and reliable data collection and analysis, aligning with the study's objectives to assess and enhance the

visibility and effectiveness of ILL services through social media promotion.

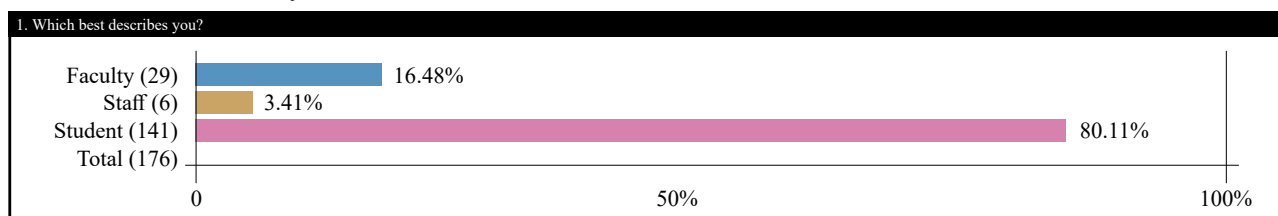
## 6. Analysis & Results:

### *Participant Demographics and Awareness Levels*

Gender:



Which best describes you?



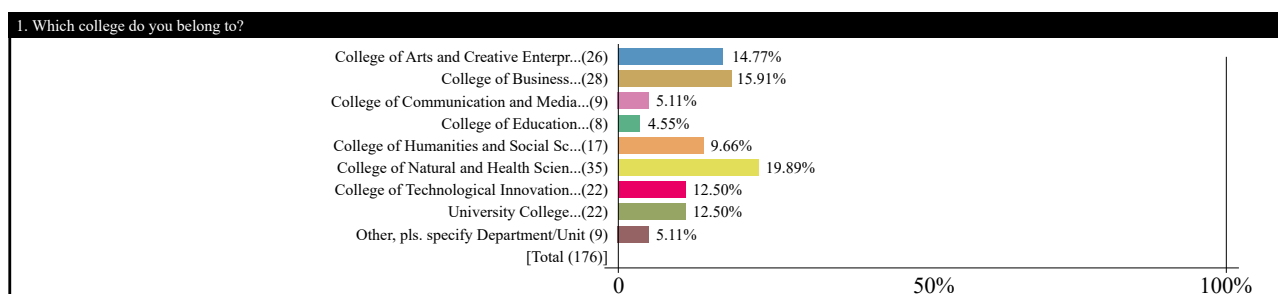
**Figure 1: Demographics**

Figure 1 shows a total of 176 respondents from the Zayed University community, such as faculty members, staff and students, took the online survey. The survey shows that one hundred seventy-six people utilized the service of interlibrary loans. In questions 1 and 2, the participants' demographics, such as gender, designation etc, were

identified. The survey showed that about 84.09% of females used the service of interlibrary loan, while 15.91% of Males requested items from interlibrary loan.

### *Utilization Patterns of ILL Services*

Figure 2 shows that 80.11 % of students used ILL, while



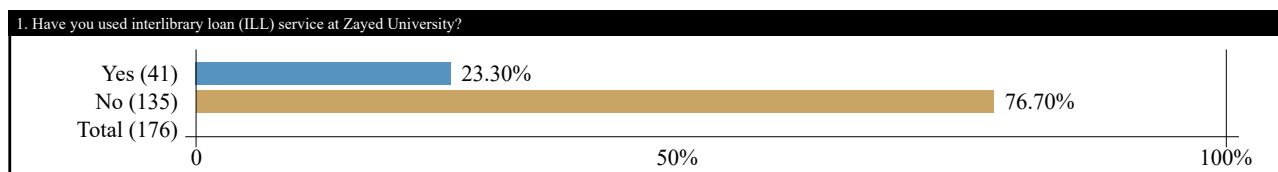
**Figure 2: Utilization of ILL from Different Departments**

16.48% of Faculty from the respondents used ILL, and less per cent went for the staff, 3.41%. A total of 176 respondents belong to 9 colleges at Zayed University in both Abu Dhabi and Dubai campuses. As shown by the Bar's College of Natural and Health Science, we can understand that they used ILL in a high percentage of 19.89%. In comparison, 4.55% of the college of education used this service less.

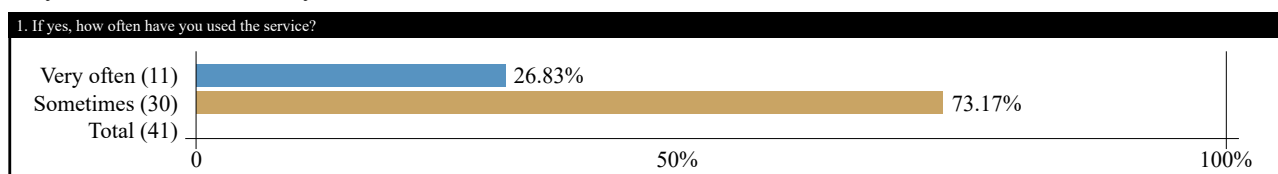
Furthermore, 5.11% of the same percentage went to the College of Communication and Media and others. Looking closely at the University College and College of Technological Innovation, while the same percentage of interlibrary loan service was visualized at 12.50%. At the same time, an increase was observed in the College of Business at 15.91% and the College of Arts & Creative

Entrepreneur at 14.77%.

Have you used interlibrary loan (ILL) service at Zayed University?



If yes, how often have you used the service?



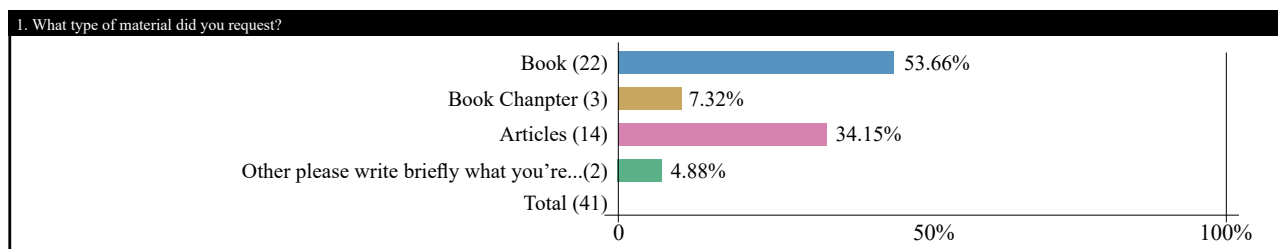
**Figure 3: Frequency of Usage of ILL**

Figure 3 shows the breakdown of answers to the Question. 4, where the participants were asked about their usage of the ILL service at Zayed University.

76.70% of the participants responded No, they have never used ILL, while 23.30 % responded yes, they have used

this service. Furthermore, those who responded yes were asked how often they have used this service. Notably, 73.17% responded sometimes, and 26.83 % responded that they have used it very often.

What type of material did you request?



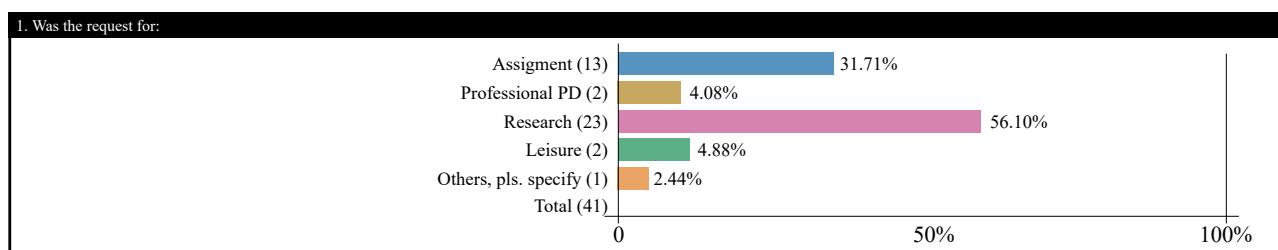
**Figure 4: Types of Materials Requested**

Figure 4 showed question 5, where participants were asked regarding the type of material that was requested through ILL?

In response, a high percentage of 53.66% went to the book

type requested through ILL service. Furthermore, we can notice that 34.15% of patrons requested articles, 7.32% requested book chapters, and 4.88 % for others.

Was the request for:



**Figure 5: Purpose of ILL Requests**



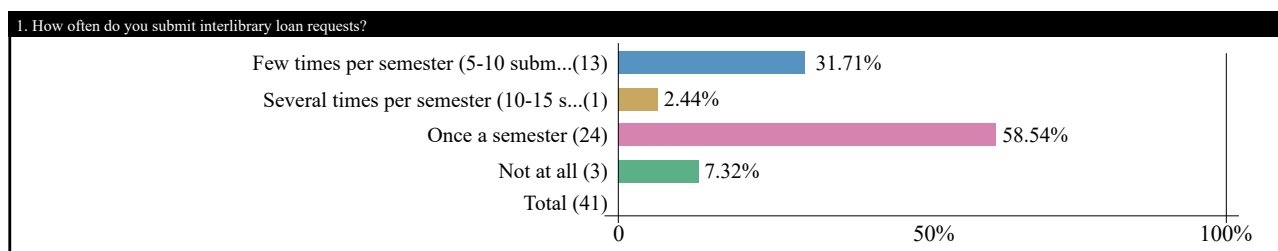
Figure 5 shows responses of question 6, where the participants were asked if the requested materials were for the assignments, PD, research, leisure or others.

56.10% indicated they requested research papers, while 31.71% used the ILL service to request materials for their

assignment. PD & leisure are equal in percentage as the participants' respondents were 4.88%, and a very low percentage of 2.44% for others uses.

### *Satisfaction with ILL Services*

How often do you submit interlibrary loan requests?

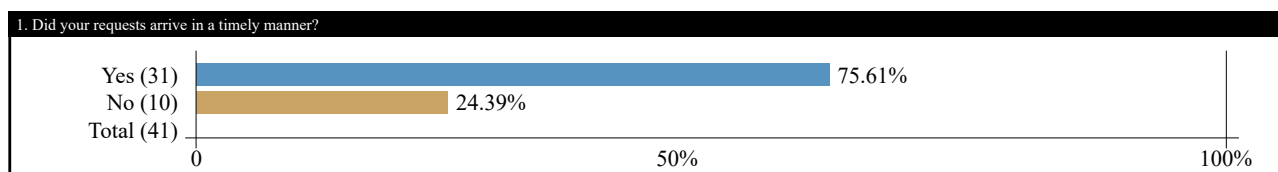


**Figure 6: Perceptions of ILL Service Timeliness**

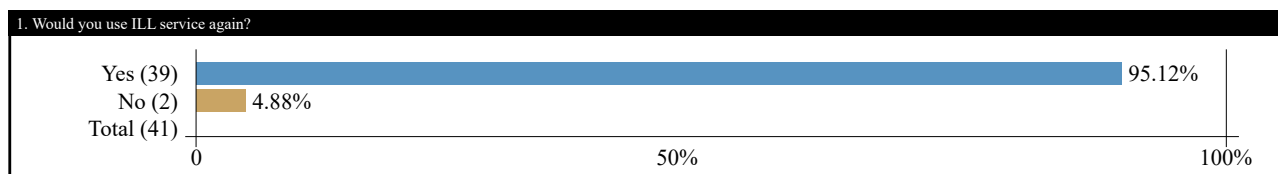
Furthermore, Figure 6 showed answers to Question 7. The participants were asked how frequently they submit ILL requests. 58.54% indicated that they submitted their requests, 31.71% their submission a few times per semester

(5-10 submit). Several times per semester (10-15 submit), 2.44% of participants indicated submitting to ILL service. Meanwhile, 7.32% do not use ILL at all when submitting.

Did your requests arrive in a timely manner?



Would you use ILL service again?



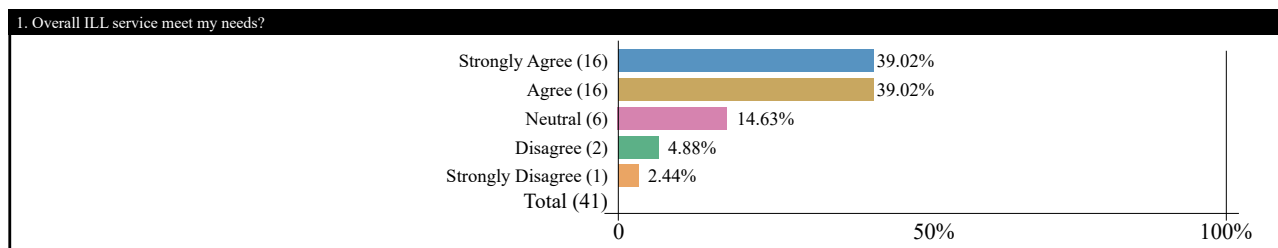
**Figure 7: Overall Satisfaction Levels and Delivery Timeliness**

Figure 7 shows the overall satisfaction and delivery timeliness of ILL services through Question 8 and 9. The participants were asked if the requested materials arrived promptly. 75.61% of respondents said yes, and they received it on time. While 24.39% indicated they did not receive it on time.

In Question 9, they were asked if they would use the ILL service again. 95.12% indicated that they would do it, but

a small percentage responded that they would not use the ILL service. This is for some participant comments; they indicated they cannot use the form on the library homepage as it does not load the request. Another comment is that it is easier for them to request directly from the author and use ResearchGate.

## Overall ILL service meet my needs?

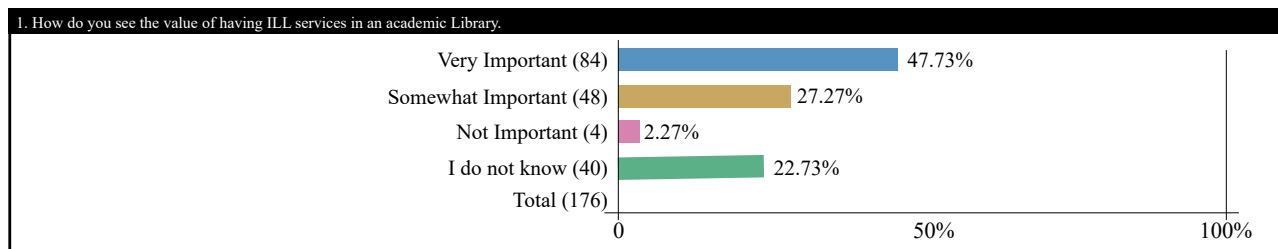


**Figure 8: Satisfaction of ILL Services**

Figure 9 shows Question 10 along with the responses. The researcher asked whether ILL service meets the patrons' needs in the survey. Agree and strongly agree were the responses of 39.02% of the participants. 14.88% expressed

neutral, 4.88 % disagreed, and a small percentage, 2.44%, responded strongly disagree. In the same question, the author asked the participants to explain how we can meet their needs. The comments are illustrated in the below:

## How do you see the value of having ILL services in an academic Library.



**Figure 9: Value of ILL Service in Academia**

Whereas Figure 10 shows the response of Question 11, where the researcher asked, How do you see the value of having ILL service in an academic library? 47.73% of the participants responded that ILL service is very important in academic libraries. 27.27% indicated that this service

is somewhat important, but 22.27% do not know if it is valuable or not to have it in academic libraries. A very small percentage, 2.27%, indicated this service is unimportant.

## Suggestions for Enhancing Awareness and Engagement

### Please explain how we can meet your needs.

Comments
To complete my master degree library arrange for me some books were not available in ZU Library, ZU Library provide me very fast and prompt service delivery to arrange the books, so with library support I completed my degree program.
Faster service if possible.
Expediting the process can be of great help!
by different ways.
I often need to get Spanish-language books.
email notification upon arrival
Make it more accessible - easier to request and track the request

**Figure 10: Participants' Recommendations Regarding ILL**

Figure 10 shows the participants responses to the last survey questions. The researcher asked the participants if they had suggestions for an ILL service office to ensure that we offer the best ILL service. For example, some

survey participants' comments or suggestions: Some participants stated the following quotes to give their suggestions. "To make announcements because students do not know



about it”

“Keep it up!”

“Send an email to students to know about this service”

“The brochure illustrated the ILL service”

“Raise more awareness about this service”

“Class visits to make students aware of what this service is about”

In conclusion, Interlibrary Loans have always been a vital part of the academic library. It is a system designed to provide the researcher with materials not available at the library. Therefore, it is clear from the survey results and the increasing number of requests that users are truly satisfied with the Interlibrary loan service and have some strong suggestions and recommendations in regards to their needs for the overall improvement of ILL services across Zayed University.

## 7. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight several critical aspects of the promotion and utilization of Interlibrary Loan (ILL) services at Zayed University Library, particularly through the use of social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. A large number of university students and faculty members have little knowledge about ILL availability according to survey results which showed 76.7% had not tried the service. Of those who understood ILL services were mainly students who used it at an 80.11% rate while faculty and staff reported lower rates at 16.48% and 3.41% respectively. Jacob and Adurogboye (2019) found consistent results showing that minimal awareness of ILL services acted as an obstacle to academic library resource utilization (19). The analysis showed books (53.66%) and articles (34.15%) constituted most service requests because they support academic research according to (4).

Two leading social platforms Instagram and YouTube demonstrated significant value in raising awareness levels across user groups. The research showed targeted multimedia content distribution through social media increased audience reach for ILL promotion while making service information easily accessible to potential users. The research confirms findings of Williams (9) who discovered that careful social media management improves both user knowledge and interest in library services. According to Rahman (8) the visual and interactive nature of Instagram helps both attract users and establish credibility for library services.

Results showed that 75.61% of users considered the ILL service prompt but operational issues persisted. According to research by Joshua and Michael (15) participants faced problems with the online request system and delivery delays indicated the need for improved ILL process streamlining. The survey results showed positive engagement from 95.12% of users who planned to return to the service while demonstrating a robust market opportunity following resolution of operational limitations.

Participants provided specific recommendations which could help enhance ILL marketing and operational execution. The proposed strategies to boost awareness consisted of multiple campaign elements which included workshops alongside brochure distribution along with classroom visits and purpose-driven email outreach. According to ESAN and UNUABOR (16), Bengtsson (28) libraries should adopt diverse communication channels to achieve maximized outreach success. Improving technical performance while creating streamlined request pathways stands to increase satisfaction levels per findings from Hebert and Visperas (14).

This research adds to existing literature about digital marketing tools in academic libraries within the specific region of the Middle East. Research results highlight how social media tools have the ability to transform modern library outreach methods while following worldwide developments outlined in Mavodza (20), Kumar and Kumar (29). Libraries which connect lower awareness problems and operational requirements will operate their interlibrary loan services more effectively while providing stronger supports for academic research and learning (30, 31).

## 8. Conclusion:

Academic libraries rely on Interlibrary Loan (ILL) services to achieve their mission by providing vital access to materials that serve student and instructor research along with educational needs. The research findings highlight Zayed University Library’s important ILL service value but demonstrate lacking understanding among users about using these services. Findings show students along with Faculty and staff show minimal ILL service usage because they lack sufficient understanding of these services. The effective tools for addressing these challenges consist of Instagram together with YouTube among social media platforms. The library successfully used these digital platforms to increase user interaction while making

ILL service information more accessible to students. Research results reveal the requirement for developing bigger marketing plans that maintain service consistency. Targeted promotional campaigns alongside usable teaching documents and ongoing educational events will advance ILL advertising methods. The analysis demonstrates that addressing operational issues with request forms and delivery timetables together will raise user satisfaction. The research data creates a strategic framework which academic libraries can use to maximize their ILL services delivery while fulfilling their users' requirements.

### **9. Practical Implications and Recommendations:**

- Conducting a small workshop in promoting Interlibrary loan to Strengthening library services by marketing Interlibrary loan (ILL).
- Encourage the attendance of students and teachers to interact during the lectures and ask questions and how to search if we don't own the materials needed.
- Support the ZU patrons research and educating their insights of the how this service critical part of the academic libraries.
- Encouraging university faculty members and students likewise to use ILL in case the resources needed unavailable, both electronic and printed
- Increase the awareness with other universities at the local, regional and international levels through participation in scientific journals or conferences through worksheets or posters
- Draft many brochures and videos to expand the awareness what is ILL
- Defining the shortcomings of the next questionnaires by identifying the type of respondent (male / female) and the respondent's recipe (student / professor) so that we can obtain more accurate results on general satisfaction and develop this experience
- Advance planning with faculty members to provide more in-depth lectures on the search for sources and databases and the introduction of new databases recently shared by the library, allowing new members to keep abreast of everything new in libraries and learning resources, or to check with Interlibrary loan section.

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