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YOUTUBE AS A MARKETING TOOL IN PROMOTING LIBRARY SERVICES

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Abstract: *This article examines the role of YouTube as a tool for promoting library services in Uzbekistan. It highlights the increasing importance of the digital environment, with over 81% of internet users in Uzbekistan actively using YouTube. The study emphasizes the shift toward video content as a preferred medium, noting its potential to enhance library visibility and create a positive image among users. Through a survey conducted among students, librarians, and the general public, the research assesses awareness, usage patterns, and interest in library-related content on YouTube. Findings reveal that while there is significant interest in educational videos, library content on YouTube remains underutilized, especially among those not directly connected to the library sector. The article suggests that for libraries to effectively engage with their audiences through YouTube, content must be tailored to meet the specific needs and preferences of users. The study concludes that YouTube is a valuable resource for modern libraries in Uzbekistan, offering a powerful platform for outreach, but emphasizes the need for strategic content creation to maximize its impact.*

Keywords: *Digital Libraries, YouTube Marketing, Library Promotion, Uzbekistan Libraries, Video Content Strategy.*

Introduction

The digital environment, which has become an integral part of modern society, has consistently shaped the nature of human activity over the past decades. The Internet audience is rapidly expanding: as of April 2024, there are 5.35 billion unique users, which is 50 million (1%) more compared to the previous year [1]. 0.55% of this number (29.52 million people) are users from Uzbekistan [2].

More than half of the Internet users (2.7 billion) are active users of the video hosting site "YouTube" [3]. For Uzbekistan, this figure is 81% of the total number of Internet users in the country (23.9 million people) [4].

The popularity of video has increased due to a variety of factors. These include not only the rapid development of video hosting services and improved internet access and speed, but also the widespread prevalence of visual perception. This not only changes the ways of perceiving information but also the mentality, preferences, and behavior of modern people.

Following modern trends, libraries are also adapting their methods and channels of interaction with the audience, increasingly incorporating the creation and posting of their own videos on the

Internet. It is important to note that video in the library context not only effectively draws attention to printed materials but also contributes to forming a positive image. Often, after the release of a film or series, interest in the book significantly increases. Thus, libraries can promote their resources and services using popular and relevant methods for users.

For libraries in Uzbekistan, the use of social networks and video hosting services is not something fundamentally new; however, this direction has only recently begun to be widely implemented. Until a certain point, the library's presence on social media was a matter of initiative, but changes occurred in 2019. "The Program of Measures for the Development of the Information and Library Sphere in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2019-2024" [6], specifically the second section (Innovative Activities and Promotion of Information and Library Institutions), outlined the further informational development of libraries in the country. Moreover, this decree led to the formation of a new organizational structure for the National Library of Uzbekistan. Since then, new reporting forms have been introduced, including one called "Activity of the Information and Library Center on Social Media" (Fig. 1), where one of the reporting points is the number of subscribers to the YouTube channel.

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Fig. 1. Reporting form "Activity of the Information and Library Center on Social Media"

Based on the above, it can be concluded that librarians in Uzbekistan also use the YouTube video hosting service like their foreign colleagues; however, the most important thing, from the author's point of view, is not the fact of working with the platform, but the effectiveness of this activity.

2. Objectives

The primary objectives of this research are:

1. To assess the impact and usage of YouTube among students and library professionals in Uzbekistan: This involves understanding how YouTube is utilized by these groups and its influence on their engagement with library resources.
2. To evaluate the level of awareness about YouTube's functionalities among students and library staff: This objective aims to determine how knowledgeable these groups are about the various features of YouTube and their potential applications for libraries.
3. To identify the statistical relationship between the level of awareness of YouTube's features and selected variables: This involves analyzing how different factors, such as demographic characteristics or professional experience, correlate with the awareness and use of YouTube.
4. To propose recommendations for innovative marketing of library services using YouTube's features: Based on the findings, this objective focuses on developing strategies for libraries to effectively use YouTube to promote their services and resources.

3. Scope and Methodology

To assess the effectiveness of using the YouTube platform as a marketing tool for promoting library services in Uzbekistan, the author conducted an online study using Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of three sections:

1. User information (gender, age, education level);
2. User preferences;
3. User interest in library content.

The following groups of respondents participated in the study:

1. Students from two universities training personnel for information and library institutions (Uzbekistan State Institute of Arts and Culture and Tashkent University of Information Technologies) [8],
2. Library staff of the republic, as well as
3. People not related to the library sector (general audience).

Based on the survey, an analysis was conducted – a comparison of the awareness of different groups of the population about YouTube features within the framework of library promotion, as well as the relationship between various personal factors and the level of interest in library content on the video hosting platform.

A total of 203 respondents participated in the survey. Of these: students – 66 people; library staff – 51 people; people not related to the library sector – 86 people (Fig. 2). Among them were 141 women and 62 men (Fig. 3).

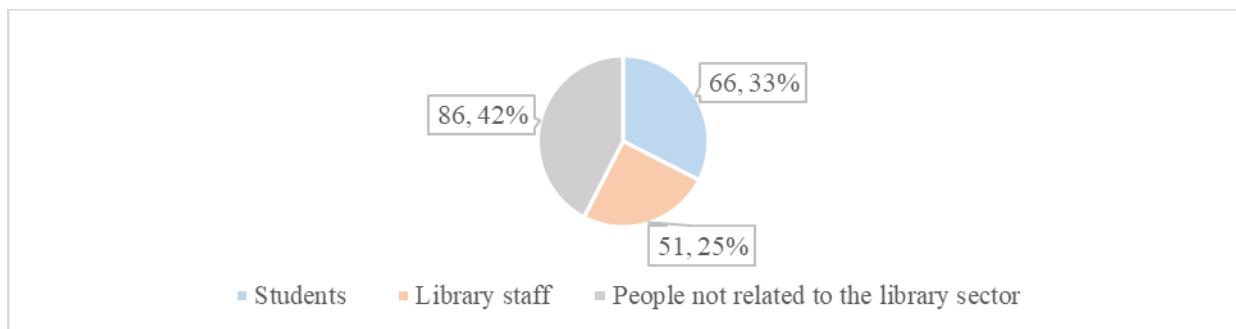


Fig. 2. Survey respondents

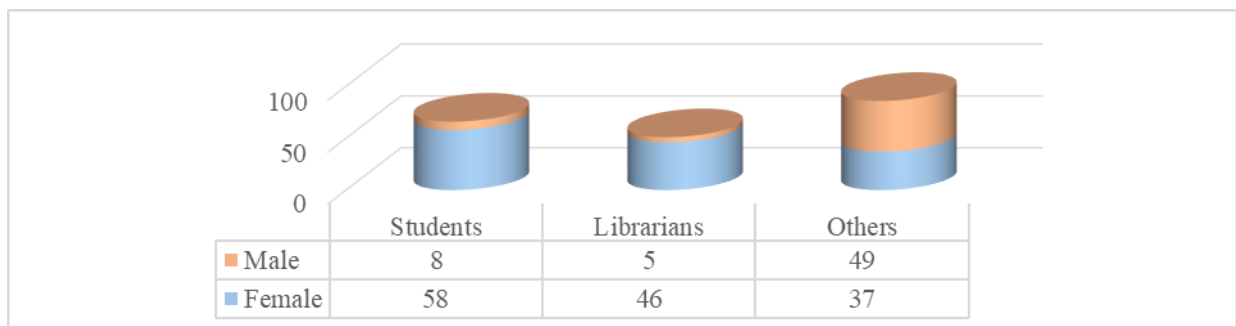


Fig. 3. Gender distribution of respondents

It is worth noting separately that among students and librarians, the number of female respondents was initially higher than that of male respondents due to the gender disparity in this type of profession.

The age of the respondents was diverse (Fig. 4). As for students over 30 years old, the majority of them are part-time students.

The average age of librarian respondents is 39 years, which can be considered an indicator of maturity and experience among employees. However, this trend may indicate a lack of influx of young professionals into the profession, which could lead to problems with innovation and adaptation to new technologies [9].

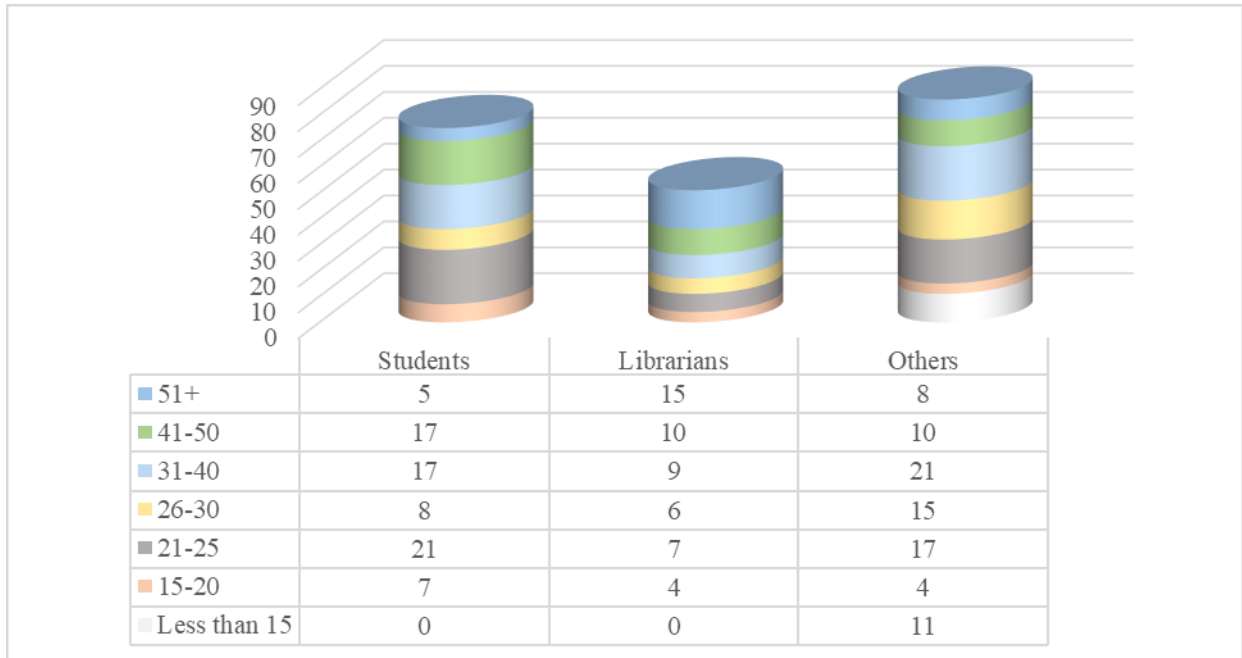


Fig. 4. Age groups of respondents

The respondents' education level indicators are as follows (Fig. 5):

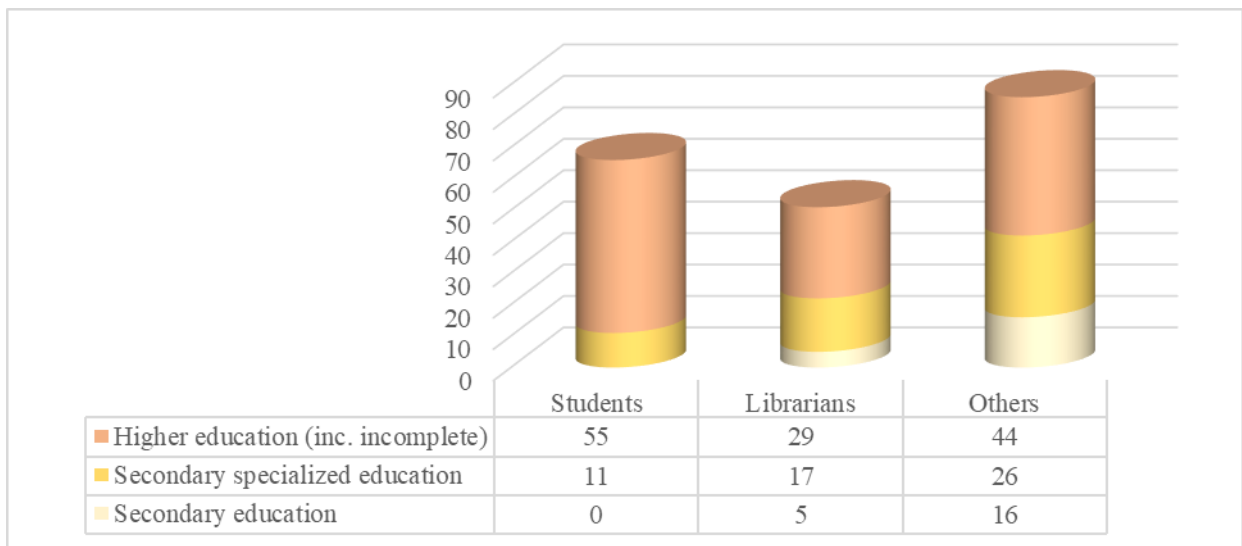


Fig. 5. Education level of respondents

4. Literature Review

Researchers such as Elena Hamidi, Evelyn Polachek Carey, and Karen Schroeder Sorensen note a shift in information consumption towards new media (Internet, tablets, smartphones, etc.) instead of traditional print publications [5]. They emphasize that video not only conveys important information about a product or service but also creates a positive image through a memorable slogan or motif. The availability of the Internet even in remote areas allows companies to become more recognizable among potential consumers.

In 2021, Victor Sorna Prabhu, a doctoral student at the Faculty of Library and Information Science, and M. Tamizhchelvan, Deputy Librarian of Gandhigram Rural Institute (Gandhigram, India), conducted a study among students and librarians of this university [7]. The study attempted to determine the level of awareness about the use of YouTube and its potential for creating an effective library channel. The objectives of their study were:

1. To determine the impact and use of YouTube among students;
2. To determine the level of awareness about YouTube features among students and library staff;
3. To determine the statistical relationship between the level of awareness about YouTube features and selected variables;
4. To make suggestions for innovative marketing of library services using YouTube features.

5. Result and Discussion

Respondents' preferences for watching videos on YouTube

The next section of the questionnaire is designed to collect information about the habits and preferences of respondents in using the YouTube platform. The questions in this section help understand which types of videos and channels users prefer, how often and in what conditions they watch content, as well as what factors influence their video choices.

The question about having a YouTube account showed the following results (Fig. 6): most users (63%) have their own YouTube account.

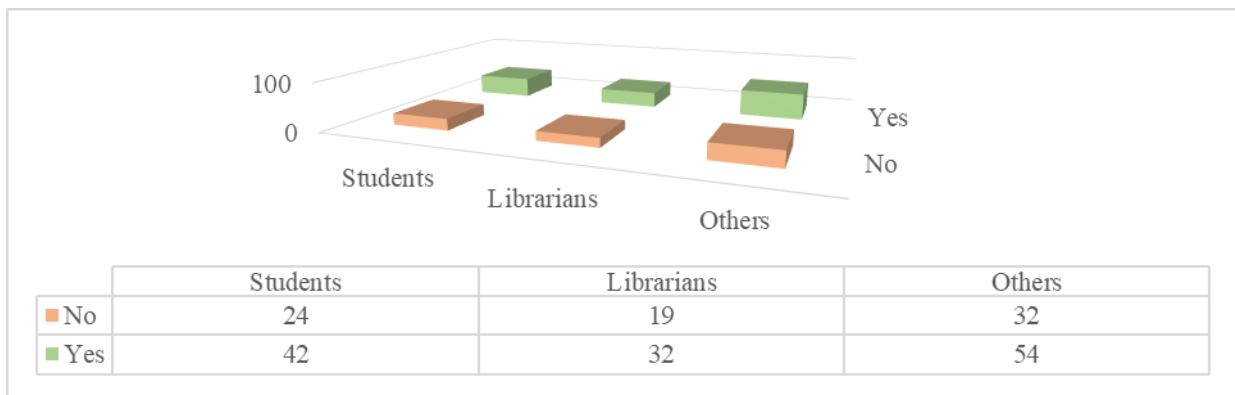


Fig. 6. Respondents' YouTube account ownership

The question about the preferred device for watching video content provides valuable insights into how and where the audience consumes video content, which can significantly improve content marketing strategies, technical optimization, and overall audience engagement (Fig. 7). Most

respondents use their phones and, to a lesser extent, exclusively computers to watch videos on YouTube.

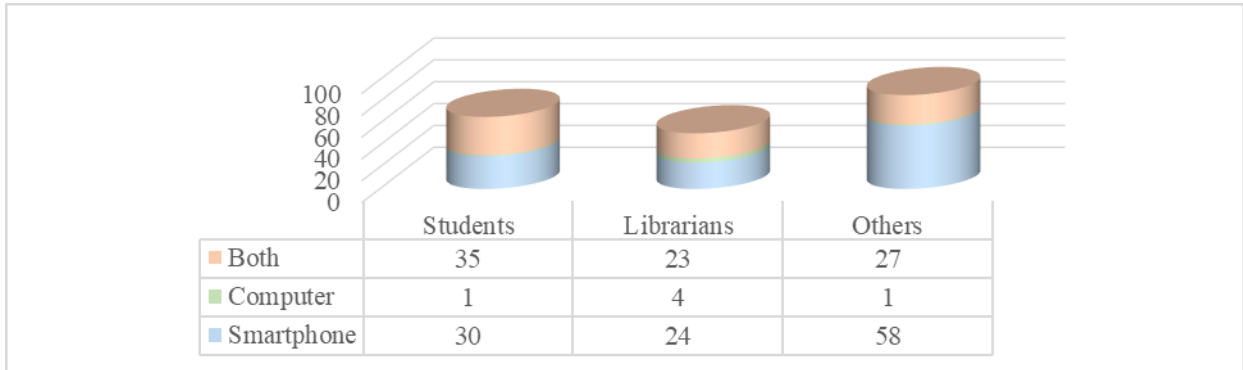


Fig. 7. Devices for watching YouTube

Regarding the frequency of watching videos on the hosting platform, specific timeframes, and the amount of content watched per week, the following responses were obtained (Fig. 8-10):

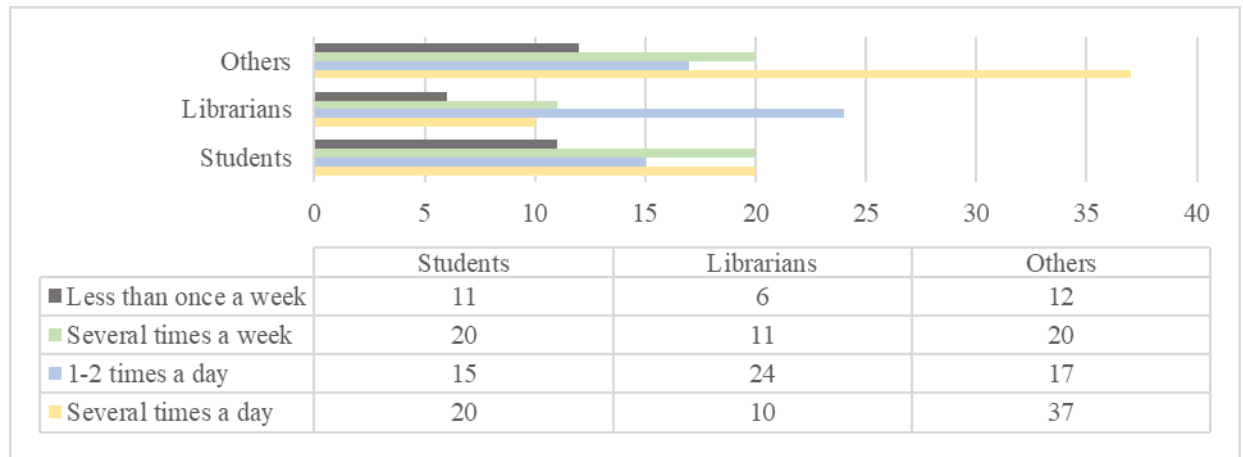


Fig. 8. YouTube viewing frequency

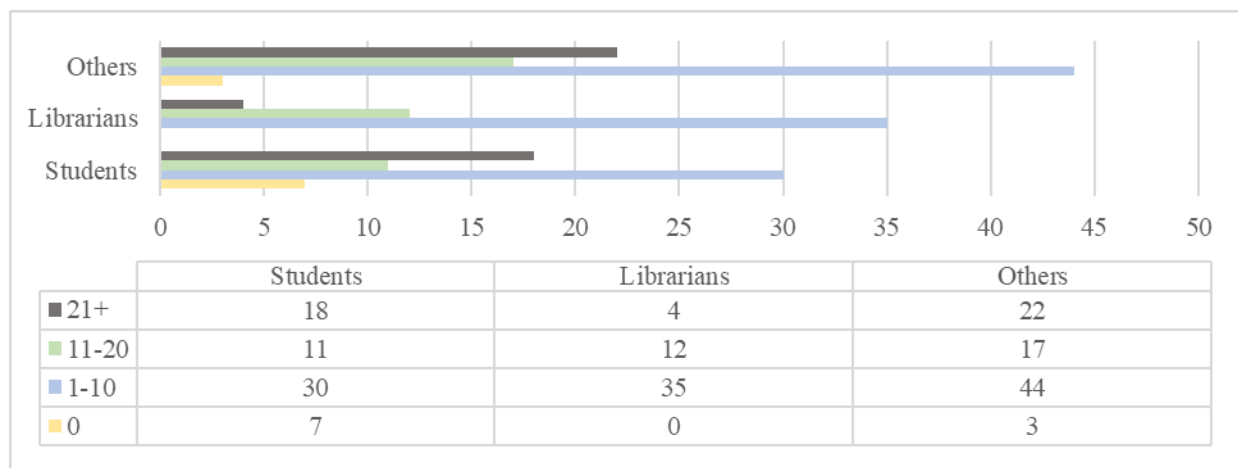


Fig. 9. Number of video views per week

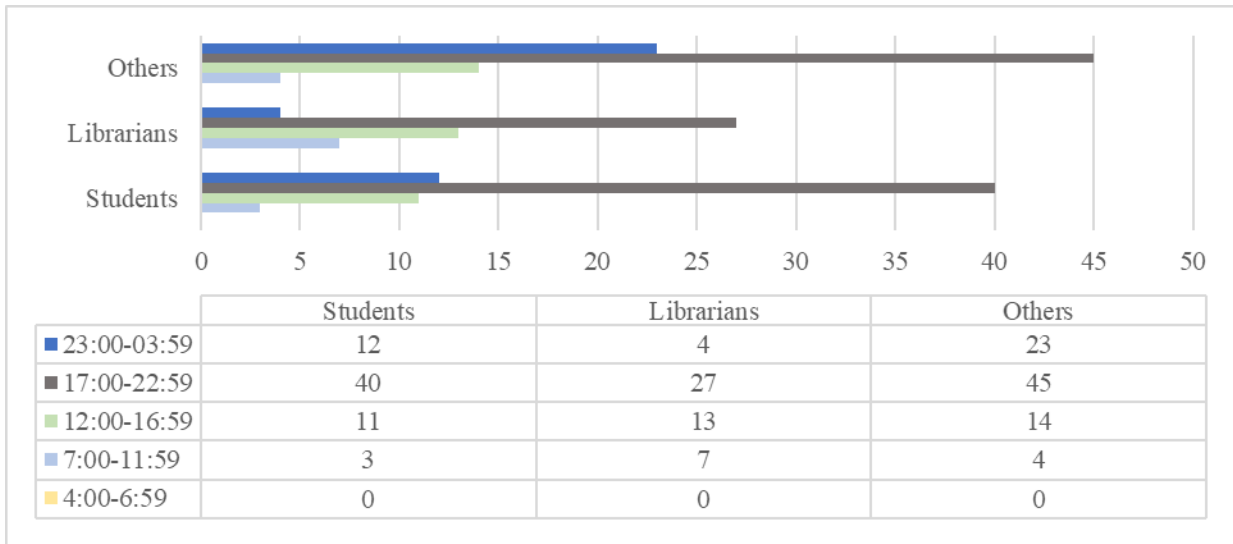


Fig. 10. User activity time intervals

Based on the results, it can be concluded that all user groups are familiar with the platform in one way or another, use it quite actively, and the "peak" viewing time is in the evening.

Users' video viewing preferences can be judged by Figure 11 (average values). The main content that interests users are educational and musical videos. Such videos can and are already being recorded by libraries, including the Tashkent Information and Library Center "Bilim" [10] to promote their literature.

The next question was aimed at studying the number of content creators (by direction) on the platform. It was found that 16.3% of respondents are YouTubers, and 45.5% of them create library content (Fig. 12).

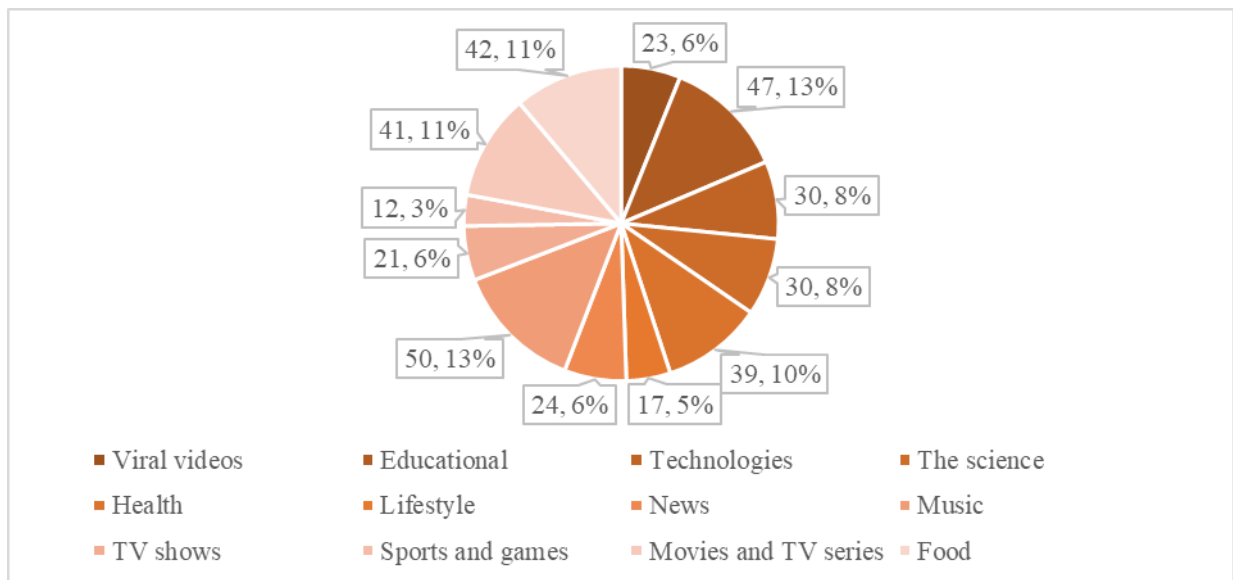


Fig. 11. User preferences in watching videos

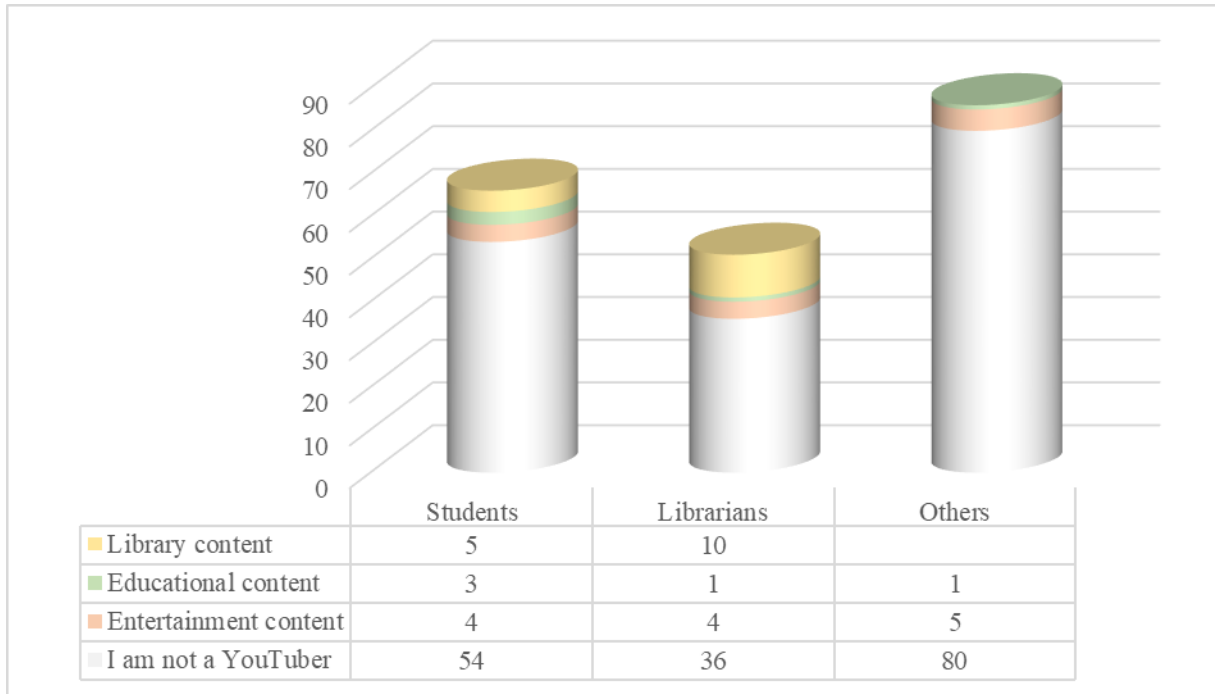


Fig. 12. Number of YouTubers among respondents and their content

Users' interest in library content

The last block of questions was aimed at studying the platform's audience that watches library content, which can be sourced from YouTube recommendations as well as targeted library advertising (Fig. 13-15).

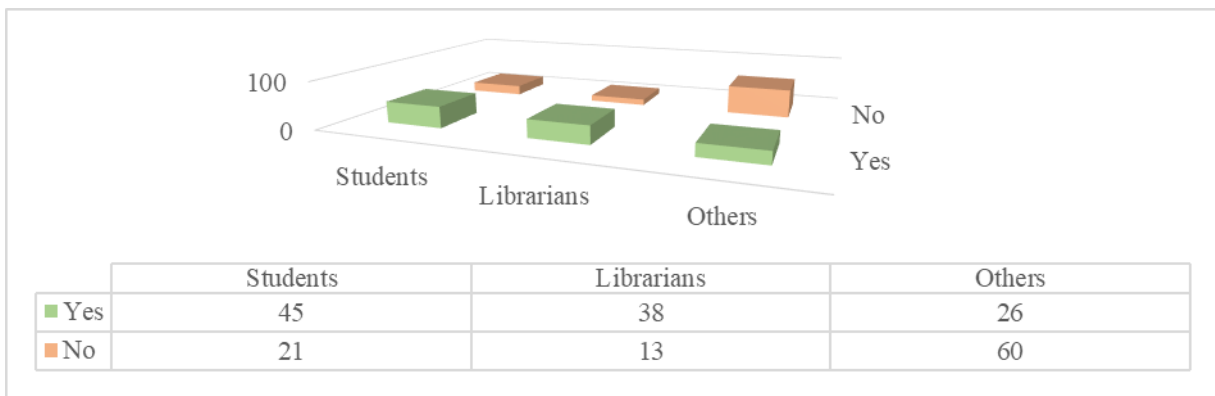


Fig. 13. Preference for library content over others

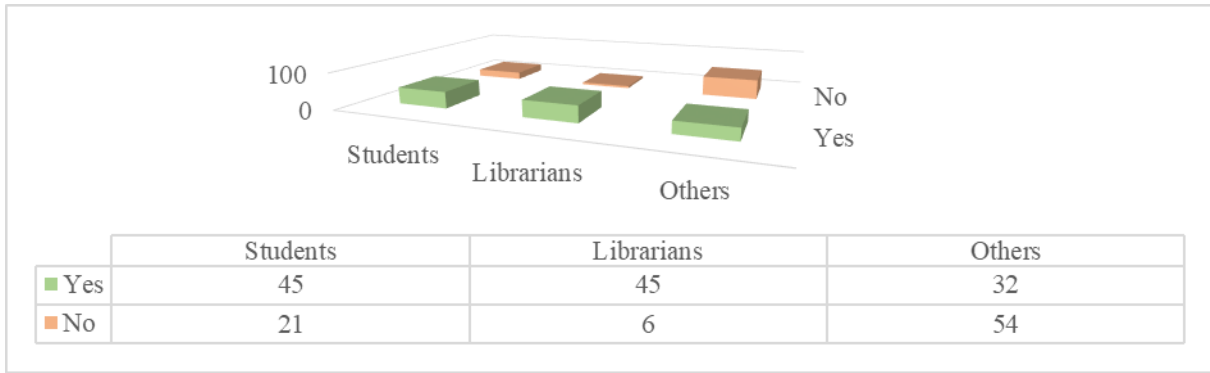


Fig. 14. Viewing video content recommended by libraries

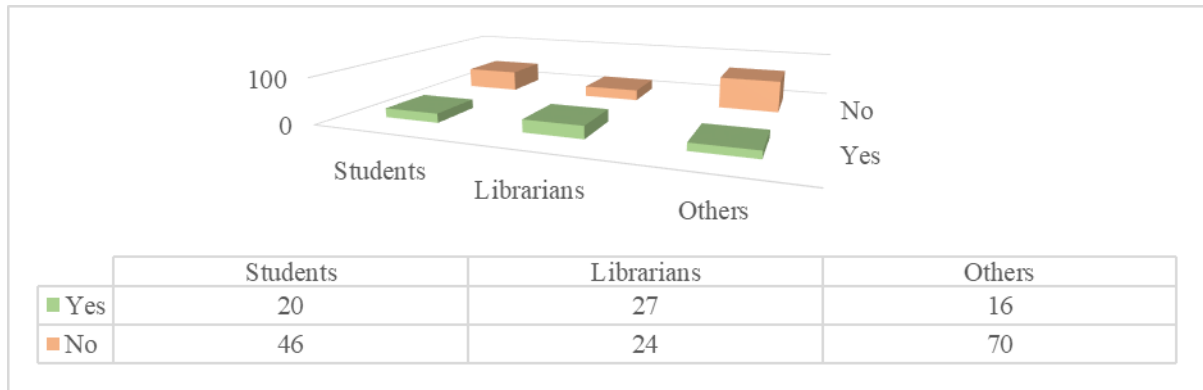


Fig. 15. Number of respondents subscribed to library channels on YouTube

6. Findings

- Participants:
 - ✓ A total of 203 respondents participated in the survey.
 - ✓ Of these, 66 are students, 51 work in libraries, and 86 are individuals not affiliated with the library sector.
 - ✓ Among the respondents, 141 are female and 62 are male.
- Age of Participants:
 - ✓ The ages of the respondents vary. Students over 30 years old are predominantly enrolled in part-time study programs.
 - ✓ The average age of library staff respondents is 39 years.
- YouTube Usage:
 - ✓ 63% of respondents have their own YouTube account.
 - ✓ The primary device used for watching YouTube videos is a mobile phone, with computers being used to a lesser extent.
- Frequency and Time of Video Viewing:
 - ✓ Respondents actively use YouTube, with peak viewing times occurring in the evening.
- ✓ Video Preferences:

- ✓ The main preferences of respondents in video viewing are educational and musical videos.
- Content Creation:
 - ✓ 16.3% of respondents are content creators on YouTube, with 45.5% of them creating content related to library resources.
- Interest in Library Content:
 - ✓ Respondents show interest in library content, although this interest is weaker among individuals not affiliated with the library sector.

7. Limitations and Research Gaps

Limitations of the Study:

Focus on Limited Variables:

- The survey examines user preferences and behaviors on YouTube but does not explore deeper aspects such as motivations and psychological factors influencing the use of YouTube for library-related purposes.

Research Gaps:

Unexplored Aspects of Content Effectiveness:

- ✓ The study does not address the effectiveness of different types of YouTube content and their impact on attracting attention to library resources and services.
- Lack of Analysis on Library Strategies:
 - ✓ There is no data on how libraries use YouTube to promote their services, including specific examples of successful and unsuccessful strategies and their impact on user engagement.
- Unstudied Demographic Groups:
 - ✓ The research does not cover potential differences in interests and preferences among various demographic groups, such as older adults or individuals with mobility issues, which may affect the understanding of YouTube usage for library resources.

8. Conclusion

Based on the presented research on the impact of YouTube on library work in Uzbekistan, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The digital environment, including the YouTube platform, plays a significant role in the modern information and library sector in Uzbekistan. Statistics show that YouTube is actively used both among Internet users in general and in library activities. In particular, more than 81% of Internet users in Uzbekistan regularly visit this platform.

The study also confirms that video content on YouTube not only effectively draws attention to library resources and services but also helps form a positive image of libraries. This approach is especially relevant in the context of rapidly changing preferences of modern users, who are increasingly oriented towards visual perception and the availability of information through new media.

The data also show that a significant portion of YouTube users in Uzbekistan is interested in library content, which confirms the potential of this platform for marketing and promoting library services.

However, to enhance the effectiveness of such use, it is necessary to consider the specific characteristics of the target audience and adapt the content to their needs and preferences.

Thus, YouTube is an important tool in modern library activities in Uzbekistan, contributing not only to the expansion of the audience but also to improving access to the informational resources of libraries.

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