A MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION STARTEGY FOR MAKERERE UNIVERSITY MAIN LIBRARY

PROJECT

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A PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE EAST AFRICAN SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION

We, the members of **Group 23**, hereby declare that this project report is our original work and has been prepared through our own research under the close guidance and supervision of our project supervisor. This report does not infringe upon any existing copyright and has not been submitted, either wholly or in part, to any university, college, or other institution for the award of any academic qualification or degree. We further affirm that all statements, findings, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this report are the genuine outcomes of our research, except where due acknowledgment has been made to the work of other authors through appropriate citations and references.

Date: 31/07/2026

APPROVAL

This project has been produced under supervision and with approval of:

Mrs. Muzaki Faridah

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DEDICATION

We give all glory and thanks to Almighty God for granting us the wisdom, strength, good health, and perseverance to successfully complete this project. We dedicate this work to our families, whose love, prayers, encouragement, and sacrifices have been a constant source of motivation throughout our academic journey. We also dedicate this project to our lecturers, supervisors, mentors, friends, and classmates for their invaluable guidance, support, and inspiration during the course of this study.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAES	College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
CHS	College of Health Sciences
CHUSS	College of Humanities and Social Sciences
CoBAMS	College of Business and Management Sciences
CoCIS	College of Computing and Information Sciences
CoNAS	College of Natural Sciences
CoVAB	College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity
CEDAT	College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology
CEES	College of Education and External Studies
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MULIB	Makerere University Library
NPHC	National Population and Housing Census
SMS	Short Message Service
UEDCL	Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited

ABSTRACT

Effective marketing and communication are essential for academic libraries to improve the visibility, awareness, and utilization of information resources and services. This study examined the marketing and communication practices of Makerere University Main Library (MULIB) with the aim of developing an effective marketing and communication strategy. Specifically, the study sought to examine existing marketing and communication practices, identify challenges affecting the promotion of library services, assess users' awareness and utilization of library resources, determine appropriate communication and marketing channels for promoting library services, and develop a marketing and communication strategy for the library. The study adopted a mixed-methods descriptive case study design. A sample of library users comprising undergraduate and postgraduate students, academic staff, administrative staff, and library staff was selected using convenience, purposive, and snowball sampling techniques. Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews, observation, and document review.

The findings revealed that although MULIB had implemented various marketing and communication activities, many users were unaware of the library's promotional efforts, indicating limited visibility. The major challenges affecting the promotion of library services included inadequate awareness campaigns, limited internet access, and poor communication channels. Awareness and utilization of library services varied across service categories, with internet services and electronic resources being the most recognized, while reference services had comparatively lower awareness. Respondents identified WhatsApp and integrated multi-channel communication approaches as the most appropriate channels for promoting library services. Based on the findings, a marketing and communication strategy was developed focusing on digital communication, coordinated promotion, user awareness campaigns, orientation programmes, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. The study concluded that although MULIB had communication mechanisms in place, they were fragmented and inconsistently implemented, limiting awareness and utilization of library services. The study recommended establishing a dedicated marketing and communication function, strengthening digital communication platforms, conducting regular awareness campaigns, and enhancing user education programmes to improve the visibility and utilization of library services.

Keywords: Marketing strategy, Communication strategy, Library services, User awareness, Academic libraries.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter focused on the background of the project, statement of the problem, purpose of the project, objectives of the project, significance of the project, scope of the study and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background

In today's rapidly evolving information environment, academic libraries operate in an increasingly competitive information landscape characterized by the proliferation of digital resources, open access platforms, and commercial information providers. This shift has significantly transformed user expectations, as library users now demand instant, remote, and user-friendly access to information (Ajani et al., 2022). As a result, libraries must adopt proactive marketing approaches to remain relevant and responsive to these evolving needs. Marketing in libraries is not limited to promoting services but also involves understanding user behavior, segmenting target audiences, and designing services that meet specific academic and research needs (Okeoma et al., 2023).

Furthermore, effective marketing and communication strategies enable libraries to bridge the gap between available resources and user awareness. Many library resources, such as electronic databases, institutional repositories, and research support services, remain underutilized due to inadequate promotion (Anyim, 2018). Through strategic marketing efforts such as social media engagement, user education programs, email alerts, and outreach activities, libraries can enhance visibility and encourage greater usage of their services (Felix et al., 2016).

Moreover, the integration of digital technologies has expanded the scope of library marketing. Tools such as library websites, mobile applications, and social media platforms provide cost-effective channels for reaching a wider audience. These platforms allow libraries to interact directly with users, gather feedback, and tailor services accordingly. As Ajani et al., (2022) suggest relationship marketing is particularly important in libraries, as it focuses on building long-term engagement and user loyalty rather than one-time service use.

This project focused on developing a Marketing and Communication Strategy for Makerere University Main Library. Despite its extensive resources and services, there is often

a gap between what the library offers and what users are aware of or utilize. Okeoma et al., (2023) notes that many academic libraries struggle with effectively communicating their services, particularly to digitally oriented users.

The project examined current communication practices, identified challenges in promoting library services, and proposed practical strategies to improve outreach. It considered various communication channels such as social media, library websites, user education programs, and promotional campaigns. According to Shafawi, (2018), the use of social media platforms has significantly enhanced library visibility and user engagement when effectively implemented.

Furthermore, the study aimed to align marketing efforts with the needs of different user groups, including students, lecturers, and researchers. Diseiye, (2024) highlighted that understanding user needs is central to designing effective library marketing strategies that increase satisfaction and utilization.

Ultimately, this project sought to provide actionable recommendations that enable the Makerere University Main Library to effectively communicate its value, adapt to the digital age, and remain a central pillar of academic and research success.

Below are S. R. Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science that could be applied to communication and marketing strategies in an academic library like Makerere University Main Library:

The first law. Books are for use, emphasizes that library resources are meant to be actively accessed rather than passively stored. In today's digital and information-rich environment, this law extends beyond physical books to include e-books, databases, institutional repositories, and multimedia resources. Libraries must therefore ensure not only physical and digital accessibility but also active promotion of these resources. Through communication channels such as social media platforms, library websites, email newsletters, and user orientation programs, libraries can create awareness and encourage utilization. Without effective marketing, even the most valuable resources remain underused. This law highlights that access alone is insufficient; strategic communication is necessary to bridge the gap between availability and actual usage, ensuring that library collections fulfill their intended purpose.

The second law. Every user his or her book, underscores the importance of recognizing the diversity of library users and their unique information needs. In an academic setting, users

range from undergraduate students with basic research needs to advanced scholars requiring specialized resources. This diversity requires libraries to adopt user-centered communication and marketing strategies. Instead of applying a one-size-fits-all approach, libraries must segment their audiences and tailor their services and messages accordingly. For instance, targeted workshops, personalized email alerts, and subject-specific guides can address the specific needs of different user groups. By understanding user behavior and preferences through surveys or usage data, libraries can refine their services and communication methods. This law reinforces the idea that effective marketing in libraries is not merely about promoting resources but about aligning services with the specific needs of each user, thereby enhancing satisfaction and engagement.

The third law. Every book its reader shifts the focus from the user to the resource, emphasizing that every library material has a potential audience that must be reached. In modern libraries, where collections are vast and often digital, many valuable resources risk remaining undiscovered. This makes communication and marketing essential in ensuring visibility. Libraries must actively promote their collections through displays, digital campaigns, subject guides, and catalog enhancements. Tools such as Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs), discovery systems, and institutional repositories play a crucial role in connecting users to relevant materials. Additionally, marketing strategies like “new arrivals” alerts or themed exhibitions can draw attention to underutilized resources. This law highlights that resources do not automatically reach users; instead, libraries must act as intermediaries that facilitate this connection through deliberate and strategic communication efforts.

The fourth law. Save time for the readers, focuses on efficiency and user convenience, which are critical in today’s fast-paced academic environment. Users expect quick and easy access to information, and any complexity in accessing library services can discourage usage. Libraries must therefore design systems and communication channels that are simple, clear, and user-friendly. This includes well-organized websites, intuitive search interfaces, clear signage, and concise instructional materials. Communication tools such as FAQs, video tutorials, chat services, and help desks can guide users and reduce confusion. Effective marketing also plays a role by simplifying messages and highlighting key services in a way that is easy to understand. By minimizing barriers and streamlining access, libraries enhance

the user experience and encourage continued engagement. This law ultimately emphasizes that saving the user's time is central to delivering high-quality library services.

The fifth law. The library is a growing organism, recognizes that libraries must continuously evolve to remain relevant in a changing world. Technological advancements, shifting user expectations, and the growth of digital information have transformed how libraries operate. As a result, communication and marketing strategies must also adapt. Traditional methods such as printed notices are no longer sufficient; libraries must embrace digital platforms, including social media, mobile applications, and online engagement tools. Continuous innovation, staff development, and responsiveness to user feedback are essential for growth. Libraries must also monitor trends and adopt new technologies to enhance service delivery. This law highlights that a library is not a static institution but a dynamic entity that must grow and adapt over time. Through effective communication and modern marketing strategies, libraries can remain visible, relevant, and responsive to the evolving needs of their users.

1.2 Background of the Makerere University Main Library

The Makerere University Main Library is the central academic information hub of Makerere University and one of the most prominent university libraries in East Africa. Established as part of the Makerere University Library system in 1949, it is the oldest academic library in Uganda and plays a critical role in supporting teaching, learning, research, and innovation within the university and beyond.

Located at Makerere University's main campus on Makerere Hill, the Main Library serves as the core of a wider network that includes several college and branch libraries. It was constructed in 1959 and later expanded multiple times to accommodate a growing user population, with a current seating capacity of over 2,800 users.

The library holds a vast and diverse collection of information resources, including over 600,000 books, thousands of journals, electronic databases, and special collections such as manuscripts, archives, and Africana materials. These resources are designed to meet the academic and research needs of students, faculty, and researchers.

In addition to its academic role, the Makerere University Main Library also serves as a National Reference Library and legal depository for all publications produced in Uganda, as

well as selected United Nations publications. This unique responsibility positions it as a key custodian of the country's intellectual and cultural heritage.

The library offers a wide range of services, including access to print and electronic resources, online catalogues, digitization services, research support, and information literacy training. Its mission focused on providing transformative and inclusive library and information services that enhance knowledge generation and societal development.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Makerere University Library provides a wide range of print and electronic information resources, including scholarly databases, e-journals, institutional repositories, and research support services. Despite the availability of these resources, many students and some academic staff have limited awareness and make minimal use of them. Instead, users often rely on easily accessible sources such as Google and other general internet search engines, which may not always provide credible academic information. This situation limits the library's ability to effectively support teaching, learning, and research activities (Namugera et al., 2024).

One of the major causes of this problem is inadequate marketing and communication of library services and resources. Existing communication methods such as notice boards, emails, and orientation programs are not fully effective in reaching all users, particularly students who prefer digital and social media platforms. As a result, many library resources remain underutilized despite the significant investment made in acquiring and maintaining them.

The low level of awareness and utilization of library resources creates a gap between the services offered by the library and the actual needs of users. If this challenge is not addressed, the library may fail to fully contribute to academic excellence and research productivity at Makerere University. Therefore, there was need to develop an effective marketing and communication strategy that improved awareness, increased user engagement, and promoted the utilization of library services and resources.

1.4 Objectives of the study

1.4.1 General objectives

To develop an effective marketing and communication strategy for Makerere University Library aimed at improving awareness and utilization of library resources and services.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

1. To examine the current marketing and communication practices used by the library.
2. To identify the challenges affecting effective promotion of library services and resources.
3. To assess the level of awareness and utilization of library resources among users.
4. To determine appropriate communication and marketing channels for promoting library services.
5. To develop a marketing and communication strategy for the library

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study focused on Makerere University Main Library and its marketing and communication practices. It examined how the library promoted its services and communicated with users in order to enhance awareness and utilization of information resources. The study specifically covered library users, including undergraduate students, postgraduate students, lecturers, and researchers, with the aim of understanding their awareness levels, information needs, and interaction with library services. It also focused on information resources, both print and electronic, particularly how they were promoted and accessed by users. In addition, the study examined communication channels such as social media platforms, library websites, email communication, and user education programs used to disseminate information about library services. Furthermore, it assessed the marketing strategies employed by the library to promote services, increase visibility, and enhance user engagement. The study was limited to Makerere University Main Library and did not extend to other libraries or institutions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviewed existing literature related to marketing and communication strategies in academic libraries. The review examined how libraries marketed their services, improved user awareness, and enhanced utilization of information resources in the digital era. The literature is organized according to the study objectives: current marketing and communication practices, challenges affecting promotion of library services, awareness and utilization of library resources, communication and marketing channels, and strategies for improving library visibility and user engagement.

2.1 Concept of Marketing and Communication Strategies in Academic Libraries

2.1.1 Marketing strategies in libraries

Marketing in libraries refers to the application of marketing principles and strategies to identify user needs, create awareness of library services, and improve access and utilization of information resources. Unlike commercial organizations that focus on profit-making, libraries emphasize user satisfaction and effective service delivery.

Many authors have written different and complementary interpretations of marketization in libraries. In a joint effort by (Otike & Bar, 2022), marketization (marketing) is described as being able to determine the needs of your customers (library users), create information services that meet those needs, and communicate the information services effectively to the library's target audience. This interpretation describes the library's user needs in relation to its users' expectations.

In a second interpretation of marketing, Yoesoep, (2024) define marketing as an ongoing process of establishing value for a library user through communicating, promoting, and developing relationship management. The similarity between the two forms of marketization defines the necessity of providing users with their needs, however the difference is that Kotler and Keller put more emphasis on creating long-term value to the user while developing sustained relationships with the user.

The growing importance of library marketing has been highlighted by several authors in response to changes in the information environment.A study conducted by Joshua, (2020)

highlighted that libraries must actively market their services because users now have numerous alternatives for accessing information, particularly through internet-based platforms. From this perspective, marketing is viewed as a survival strategy that enables libraries to remain competitive and relevant. In contrast, Grebenyuk, (2024) focused on the evolution of marketing approaches within libraries, noting that traditional promotional methods have increasingly been replaced by interactive and user-centered communication strategies. Whereas Joshua emphasizes competition and relevance, Grebenyuk highlights the transformation of marketing practices to accommodate changing user behaviors and technological advancements.

A further critical area of library marketing is building relationships. According to Theodorakopoulos et al., (2024), good marketing is not just about creating awareness for library services but also about creating long-term relationships with users. Gupta, (2025) supports this statement by saying that continuous interactions between libraries and their users by way of feedback loops and participatory forms of communication help build user's engagement and satisfaction. However, there is some difference between Theodorakopoulos' approach (focusing on how relationships are managed through marketing strategies) and Gupta's focus (how user engagement and participation foster library success.

2.1.2 Communication strategies in academic libraries

Communication strategies refer to planned approaches used by organizations to deliver relevant information to identified audiences through appropriate channels in order to achieve specific objectives. In academic libraries, communication strategies involve identifying user groups, designing appropriate messages, selecting effective communication channels, receiving feedback, and evaluating communication outcomes.

According to Cornelissen (2020), strategic communication involves the deliberate management of communication processes to establish meaningful relationships between organizations and their stakeholders. In the library environment, strategic communication enables libraries to move beyond simply announcing services toward creating continuous engagement with users.

Academic libraries increasingly recognize communication as a critical component of service delivery because availability of resources alone does not guarantee their use. Rowley (2021)

argues that libraries must communicate the value of their services effectively because users often underestimate available information resources when communication is inadequate. Therefore, communication strategies help libraries improve visibility, demonstrate relevance, and strengthen relationships with students, researchers, and academic staff.

Modern library communication has shifted from one-way information dissemination toward interactive and participatory approaches. Traditional approaches involved notices, printed materials, and announcements, where users were passive recipients of information. However, digital technologies have enabled two-way communication where users can interact, provide feedback, and participate in service improvement. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2020), social media platforms have transformed organizational communication by enabling immediate interaction, collaboration, and relationship building.

For academic libraries, effective communication requires understanding user characteristics and information behaviors. Kotler and Keller (2022) emphasize that successful communication begins with identifying target audiences, understanding their needs, developing appropriate messages, selecting suitable communication channels, and measuring communication effectiveness. This approach is applicable to academic libraries because students, researchers, and academic staff have different information needs and communication preferences.

2.2 Current Marketing and communication practices in libraries

2.2.1 Traditional marketing strategies

Before the growth of digital technologies, academic libraries mainly used traditional marketing strategies such as orientation programs, library tours, brochures, posters, newsletters, exhibitions, notice boards, and face-to-face reference services to promote their resources and services. These approaches helped create awareness and guide users on how to access library information.

According to Bacter et al., (2023), traditional communication methods remain important because they provide direct interaction between service providers and users. In academic libraries, orientation programs are widely used to introduce students to library catalogs, databases, borrowing procedures, and other services. Similarly, Al-abdallah & Ababakr, (2025) argue that user education programs are among the most effective traditional marketing

tools because they improve information literacy and increase awareness and use of library resources. Face-to-face reference services also help users understand available resources and receive personalized support from librarians.

Traditional promotional materials such as posters, brochures, newsletters, and notice boards have also been used to inform users about new resources, services, events, and operating hours. These methods are relatively inexpensive and can reach many users within the institution.

However, several scholars have noted limitations of traditional marketing approaches. Neha, (2021) observed that the increasing use of internet-based information sources changed users' information-seeking behavior, reducing reliance on physical library visits. As a result, traditional methods may not effectively reach distance learners and users who prefer online communication channels. In contrast, Nesterenko et al., (2023) argue that traditional marketing strategies should not be replaced entirely but integrated with digital communication tools.

2.2.2 Digital marketing practices

The advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has significantly transformed marketing practices in academic libraries. Unlike traditional approaches that rely on physical interactions and printed materials, digital marketing enables libraries to communicate with users through online platforms such as websites, social media, email services, blogs, and electronic newsletters.

Digital marketing gives organizations a way to communicate with large groups of people at much higher speeds and lower costs than has been possible in traditional marketing communications (Chinara, 2018). Digital opportunities for libraries to promote services, products, and events regardless of where users are physically located. With more students and researchers turning to online sources for information; having multiple promotional avenues will continue to be essential.

Social media has become popular as one of the most widely used digital marketing tools by libraries. Examples include using Facebook, X, Instagram, and WhatsApp to provide updates, promote new resources, and interact with users. Florence, (2015) found that social media improves communication between libraries and their users by facilitating interaction and

obtaining rapid feedback. These authors' views emphasize user engagement, while Atuase & Maluleka, (2026) emphasize the greater potential reach and cost savings associated with libraries utilizing digital marketing channels.

Email marketing is another common digital strategy used by academic libraries. Libraries distribute electronic newsletters, alerts, and announcements to inform users about new books, databases, training workshops, and research support services. Rysavy et al., (2021) note that email marketing is a cost-effective method that enables libraries to communicate directly with users. Compared to social media, email provides a more targeted approach because messages can be delivered to specific user groups.

According to Ajibare & State, (2024),library websites also play a central role in digital marketing. They provide access to online catalogs, electronic databases, institutional repositories, and virtual reference services. While social media primarily supports interaction and promotion, websites serve as comprehensive information hubs where users can access library resources and services at any time.

2.2.3 Emerging marketing practices

As an innovative approach to marketing within the framework of an academic Library, emerging marketing practices may involve advanced digital technology such as mobile apps, search engine optimization (SEO), web analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), and virtual service platforms. Emerging marketing practices have enhanced the library's visibility, access to resources, and user engagement in the digital marketplace.

According to Barsha & Munshi, (2023), mobile technologies have substantially increased the access to library services for users by enabling them to interact with library systems on their smartphones and tablets. The global market penetration of smartphones exceeds 5.3 billion users, making mobile applications one of the most effective ways to communicate and provide services to library users. Users can use the mobile applications to search for books in the library’s catalog, renew books, reserve materials, and access e-resources from anywhere in the world, which provides improved convenience and access to resources (Jamalova & György, 2020).

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) has also become a key strategy for improving the visibility of library websites. Since over 90% of online experiences begin with a search

engine query (Şahina & Dirsehan, 2023), libraries increasingly optimize their websites and repositories to appear higher in search results. This enhances discoverability of institutional repositories, databases, and library guides, especially for users who may not directly access the library homepage.

The Library's use of web analytics software has become a standard for monitoring and measuring library users' interactions with library web sites. Web analytics software provides information, such as: the number of times people visited a specific page; how many times people used a certain database; how many downloads of a file occur each month; and where users are coming from (Yousuf & Naeem, 2022).

AI is also changing how libraries are marketing their services and delivering services by providing AI based chatbots and virtual assistants, as well as AI based recommendation systems which allow libraries to make recommendations of relevant materials to users based on previous usage and/or searches (Jha, 2023).

Furthermore, many academic libraries have begun to use several virtual engagement tools to provide access and/or support to users to access library resources; these tools include webinars, online tutorials, recorded videos and live chats. As a result of online learning, there have been substantial increases in user participation in virtual information literacy training compared to in-person training in university libraries, particularly in distance learners and graduate students.

2.2.4 Communication Strategies in Academic Libraries

2.2.4.1 Traditional Communication Strategies

Communication strategies are essential components of academic library management because they determine how effectively users receive information about available resources, services, programmes, and institutional developments. Academic libraries have traditionally relied on communication approaches such as face-to-face interactions, library orientation programmes, user education sessions, printed guides, notice boards, and direct reference services to share information with users. These approaches remain important because they provide personalized support and enable users to obtain immediate guidance from librarians.

Bacter et al. (2023) noted that traditional communication methods remain valuable because they promote direct interaction between organizations and their audiences. In academic libraries, orientation programmes and information literacy sessions help users understand library procedures, electronic resources, research support services, and information retrieval techniques (Al-abdallah & Ababakr, 2025). However, changing user information-seeking behaviours have reduced dependence on physical communication methods, as many students and researchers increasingly prefer online sources of information and digital communication channels (Neha, 2021).

2.2.4.2 Digital Communication Strategies

The growth of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has transformed communication practices in academic libraries by providing faster, flexible, and interactive methods of reaching users. Digital communication platforms such as library websites, emails, social media, online newsletters, and virtual support services enable libraries to provide information beyond physical library spaces.

Husain (2015) observed that ICT applications have improved communication in academic libraries by increasing accessibility and supporting timely dissemination of information. Similarly, Namugera et al. (2024) highlighted that virtual library services have created new opportunities for universities to communicate with users and provide continuous support, particularly for remote and distance learners. Digital communication therefore enables libraries to reach wider audiences while improving user engagement with available services.

2.2.4.3 Social Media Communication

Social media has become one of the most widely adopted communication tools in academic libraries because of its ability to support interaction, feedback, and information sharing. Platforms such as Facebook, X, Instagram, and WhatsApp allow libraries to promote new resources, announce training sessions, provide service updates, and respond to user inquiries.

Florence (2015) established that social media improves communication between libraries and users by facilitating rapid information exchange and interaction. Ihejirika et al. (2021) further

emphasized that effective social media communication requires strategic planning, consistent content creation, and continuous user engagement. Kumar and Ihejirika (2023) also noted that increased engagement through social media strengthens relationships between libraries and their users.

For academic libraries such as Makerere University Main Library, social media platforms provide an opportunity to communicate directly with students and staff through accessible and frequently used channels. However, successful social media communication requires dedicated management, regular updates, and content that addresses user information needs.

2.2.4.4 Email and Targeted Communication

Email communication remains an important strategy for academic libraries because it allows information to be delivered directly to specific user groups. Libraries use emails and electronic newsletters to communicate information about newly acquired resources, database updates, training opportunities, library regulations, and research support services.

According to Rysavy et al. (2021), email communication is a cost-effective approach that enables libraries to reach users with relevant information in a timely manner. Unlike general communication platforms, email allows libraries to tailor messages according to user categories, including undergraduate students, postgraduate researchers, and academic staff. This improves the relevance and effectiveness of library communication.

2.2.4.5 Website-Based Communication

Library websites serve as central communication platforms where users access information about library resources, services, catalogues, institutional repositories, and online support facilities. A well-developed library website provides users with continuous access to accurate and updated information regardless of their physical location.

Ajibare and State (2024) emphasized that academic libraries require effective digital platforms to improve visibility and ensure users can easily access information about available services. Search engine optimization and website improvement strategies further enhance

discoverability by enabling users to locate library resources through online searches (Şahina & Dirsehan, 2023).

2.3 Challenges affecting effective promotion of library services

Insufficient funding is a primary obstacle to providing marketing opportunities for academic libraries. Marketing initiatives require financial support in order to adequately support their distribution avenues, including (but not limited to) the creation and maintenance of library websites, design of promotional materials, investing in digital technologies, and conducting outreach campaigns to educate users about the library's services (Mohammed, 2021). Since most libraries function under tight financial conditions, this limits their capability to provide long-term marketing programs. The American Library Association, (2015) has indicated that a number of libraries do not have separate budgets to allocate for marketing expenditures. Additional studies (Iwhiwhu, et al., 2010) have demonstrated that inadequate financial support severely limits libraries' outreach and awareness initiatives.

Limited marketing experience among library staff is another challenge to providing marketing opportunities for academic libraries. Librarians have training in information management, not marketing or communication, which will impact the success of any marketing or promotional initiatives. Hamad, (2022) found that many libraries continue to view marketing as a secondary function or responsibility, leading to inadequate promotional strategies. Edith, (2025) found that insufficient marketing competencies in librarians hurt the ability to engage and retain users or to promote library services effectively.

Technological constraints also affect library marketing, particularly in developing countries. Effective digital promotion depends on reliable internet connectivity, updated ICT infrastructure, and access to modern communication platforms. However, many university libraries continue to experience challenges related to poor internet services and inadequate technological resources. Idemudia et al., (2023) reported that limited ICT infrastructure remains a major barrier to the implementation of digital marketing strategies in academic libraries.

Low user engagement further undermines marketing efforts. The increasing availability of freely accessible information through search engines and social media has changed users’

information-seeking behavior. A study by Daoud et al., (2023) found that students often prefer search engines such as Google because of their convenience and ease of use, reducing the use of library databases and information services. Research by Okeoma et al., (2023) similarly showed that many students begin their information searches on the open web rather than through library platforms, creating a visibility challenge for academic libraries.

Resistance to change among both staff and users can also hinder the adoption of modern marketing approaches. Libraries that continue to rely primarily on traditional communication channels such as notice boards and printed materials may struggle to reach digitally oriented users. According to Husain, (2015), organizational resistance to innovation often slows the adoption of new marketing practices and technologies. This challenge is particularly evident in institutions where staff have limited digital skills or insufficient training in emerging communication tools.

Information overload has become an additional challenge in the digital era. Students are exposed daily to large volumes of content through social media, websites, emails, and mobile applications. As a result, library messages often compete with numerous other information sources for users' attention. Ahmed & Rafiq, (2025) found that excessive digital information can reduce the visibility and effectiveness of library communication campaigns unless messages are carefully targeted and personalized.

2.4 Awareness and utilization of library resources among users

Awareness of library services is a major determinant of resource utilization. Users are unlikely to use library resources effectively if they are unaware of their availability, relevance, or access procedures. Studies consistently show that low awareness contributes to underutilization of both physical and electronic resources.

A study conducted by David, (2017) found that many students underused electronic resources because they lacked awareness and adequate information literacy skills. Similarly, Baayel & Asante, (2019) reported that limited awareness of electronic databases was a key factor behind low usage among university students. In many academic institutions, students rely on familiar web search tools rather than specialized library resources simply because they have not been adequately introduced to available services and databases.

Information literacy training has been identified as an important strategy for improving resource utilization. Jude & Innocent, (2020) observed that users who received training in database searching, information retrieval, and evaluation of information sources were more likely to use library resources effectively. Training increases users' confidence in navigating catalogues, databases, and digital repositories, thereby improving access to scholarly information.

Convenience also strongly influences user behavior. Many students prefer general search engines because they provide quick and simple access to information. Adetayo, (2023) reported that a large proportion of students begin their research with internet search engines rather than library systems because they perceive them as easier to use. While such tools offer convenience, they do not always provide authoritative or academically vetted materials.

User satisfaction further affects the continued use of library resources. Libraries that provide responsive services, updated collections, reliable digital access, and effective communication tend to experience higher levels of user engagement and resource usage. Khaola & Mabilikoane, (2015) noted that service quality and user satisfaction are closely associated with repeat library use and positive perceptions of library value.

Overall, awareness, information literacy, convenience, and user satisfaction interact to influence the utilization of library resources. Libraries that invest in user education, clear communication, and accessible services are more likely to achieve higher levels of resource usage and user engagement (Tarihi & Rahmanova, 2025).

2.5 Appropriate communication and marketing channels

The selection of appropriate communication and marketing channels is critical for enhancing awareness and utilization of library services. As libraries increasingly operate in digital environments, they are required to adopt communication approaches that align with users' changing information-seeking behaviors and technology preferences. Recent studies indicate that the effectiveness of library marketing depends not only on the message being communicated but also on the channels used to reach target audiences (Ajibare & State, 2024).

Library communication has relied heavily on social media platforms as a means of quickly disseminating information, engaging with users directly, and promoting library resources and

events. According to Florence (2015), social media has increased the visibility of library services and improved user engagement. In addition, digital marketing tactics based on social media are becoming increasingly valuable for libraries to attract and keep users in the digital age, according to Ajibare and State (2024).

Library websites remain central communication platforms that provide access to online catalogues, electronic databases, institutional repositories, and library announcements. The growth of digital libraries has increased the importance of websites as primary gateways to information resources. According to Tarihi and Rahmanova (2025), modern libraries are increasingly redefining access to information through digital platforms, making library websites essential tools for communication and service delivery. Search engine optimization (SEO) further enhances the visibility of library websites and digital resources by improving their ranking in online searches (Daoud et al., 2023; Şahina & Dirsehan, 2023).

Communication channels such as email and mobile have continued to provide valuable marketing for libraries. Libraries often use email to provide updates about new acquisitions, training opportunities, links to subscribed databases, and updates on services. Libraries can provide timely notifications, reminders, and customized information services through mobile communications, especially using SMS and smartphone applications. Rysavy et al. (2021) highlighted that the effectiveness of text messaging/e-mail as means of maintaining user engagement with library services, particularly in a virtual learning environment. The ongoing increase of smartphone use has also created opportunities to increase mobile library communications (Jamalova & György, 2020).

Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) are also transforming library communication. AI-powered chatbots can provide instant responses to user inquiries, support information retrieval, and offer personalized assistance. Adetayo (2023) notes that the adoption of ChatGPT and similar AI tools is creating new opportunities for user engagement in academic libraries. Likewise, Jha (2023) and Barsha and Munshi (2023) highlight the potential of artificial intelligence to improve service delivery and enhance communication between libraries and users.

Collaboration with academic departments represents another effective communication strategy. Through orientation programs, classroom sessions, faculty meetings, and research workshops, libraries can directly engage students and academic staff. Ahmed and Rafiq

(2025) emphasize that targeted information dissemination services significantly improve awareness and accessibility of research resources among academic communities.

Although digital channels dominate contemporary marketing practices, traditional communication methods such as notice boards, brochures, posters, exhibitions, and face-to-face interactions remain relevant. Research comparing traditional and modern communication approaches suggests that each method offers unique advantages depending on the target audience and communication objective (Bacter et al., 2023). Consequently, libraries are increasingly adopting integrated communication strategies that combine both digital and traditional channels.

According to research on communications and marketing, using multiple forms of communication will result in greater success than using only a single method. In their study, Al-abdallah & Ababakr (2025) found that by utilizing both digital and traditional channels of communication together, the reach and interaction with audiences increased substantially. Similarly, Nesterenko et al. (2023) observed that when communicating through different types of media (i.e., simultaneously), organizations that operate within an all-digital business model to create more effective communication. Therefore, if academic libraries want to increase awareness and usage of their services, they should develop and use a blended marketing approach that makes use of a multitude of communication methods (i.e., social media, websites, e-mail, mobile technology, artificial intelligence-driven tools, etc.) along with traditional promotional techniques.

2.6 Strategies for improving user engagement and service visibility

Academic libraries are increasingly adopting innovative strategies to enhance user engagement and improve the visibility of their services. As information-seeking behavior shifts toward digital platforms, libraries must implement approaches that strengthen communication, increase awareness, and encourage the utilization of available resources. The literature identifies digital, institutional, and user-centered strategies as key approaches for improving library visibility and user participation.

2.6.1 Digital strategies

It is now vital that libraries use digital technologies as effective communication vehicles for their services and as a way of reaching out to the community. By leveraging social media, email campaigns, mobile applications, virtual reference services, and online tutorials, libraries are able to connect with individual users in a much more efficient manner while at the same time accessing a larger audience than before. Using traditional methods for library outreach was typically prohibitively expensive. As Bengtsson, (2023) stated: "the emergence of digital marketing as an outreach technique has revolutionized library outreach"; as cited in Ajibare & State, 2024). Similarly, Li et al., (2023) pointed out that social media networking systems increase the amount and quality of interaction that occurs between libraries and individual users; thereby increasing both individual user awareness of library resources, as well as the use of library resources.

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) has also provided libraries with additional opportunities for digital engagement. Chatbots and virtual assistants that utilize artificial intelligence technology are able to provide instantaneous responses to users' inquiries, facilitate information retrieval, and provide personalized services. Adetayo (2023) indicated that academic libraries are continuing to implement additional artificial intelligence applications, such as ChatGPT, to enhance user support and improve the accessibility of library services. Similarly, Jha (2023) and Yousuf and Naeem (2022) assert that AI has the potential to improve both user experience and service delivery, as well as enhance the overall efficiency of library service delivery systems.

Libraries are also utilizing web analytics and data-driven marketing approaches to monitor user behavior and evaluate the effectiveness of communication strategies. Theodorakopoulos and Theodoropoulou (2024) emphasize that data analytics helps organizations understand user preferences and tailor services to meet their needs. In addition, search engine optimization (SEO) improves the visibility of library websites and digital resources by increasing their accessibility through online searches (Daoud et al., 2023).

2.6.2 Institutional strategies

Institutional support is fundamental to the success of library marketing initiatives. Effective promotion requires formal policies, strategic planning, adequate funding, and administrative commitment. Grebenyuk (2024) notes that successful library marketing programs are often

supported by institutional frameworks that integrate marketing activities into broader organizational objectives. Libraries that allocate dedicated budgets for marketing activities are better positioned to sustain promotional campaigns and adopt emerging technologies.

Professional development and staff training are also critical components of institutional support. As digital communication technologies continue to evolve, librarians require skills in digital marketing, content creation, social media management, and data analytics. Edith (2025) argues that developing professional marketing competencies among librarians is essential for effective library promotion in the contemporary information environment. Similarly, Gupta (2025) highlights the importance of innovation, experimentation, and continuous learning in enhancing library service delivery.

The integration of marketing activities into institutional strategic plans and performance measurement frameworks further strengthens accountability and effectiveness. Otike and Bar (2022) suggest that innovation-oriented management approaches enable academic libraries to respond more effectively to changing user expectations and competitive information environments.

2.6.3 User-Centered Strategies

User-centered strategies focus on understanding and responding to the needs, preferences, and expectations of library users. These approaches emphasize active user participation, personalized communication, feedback mechanisms, and continuous service improvement. Libraries that prioritize user needs are more likely to achieve higher levels of satisfaction, engagement, and resource utilization.

Personalized communication has become increasingly important in modern library services. Through targeted emails, mobile notifications, and customized information services, libraries can provide users with relevant and timely information. Ahmed and Rafiq (2025) found that selective dissemination of information enhances user access to relevant resources and improves engagement with library services.

User feedback mechanisms such as surveys, suggestion platforms, and service evaluations provide valuable insights into user experiences and expectations. Khaola and Mabilikoane (2015) established that user satisfaction is strongly associated with the frequency of library use, suggesting that libraries should continuously assess and improve service quality.

Furthermore, involving users in decision-making processes helps libraries design services that better reflect user needs and preferences.

Collaboration with student associations, faculty members, and academic departments also contributes to improved visibility and engagement. Through orientation programs, workshops, and academic partnerships, libraries can strengthen awareness of their services and foster stronger relationships with users. Mohammed (2021) emphasizes that user-focused promotional initiatives significantly improve awareness and utilization of library resources in higher education institutions.

Overall, the literature suggests that effective user engagement and service visibility require a combination of digital innovation, institutional commitment, and user-centered practices. Libraries that integrate these strategies are more likely to increase awareness, strengthen user relationships, and enhance the utilization of their services and resources.

Summary

The reviewed literature indicates that academic libraries use both traditional and digital marketing strategies to promote their services and resources. While digital communication tools such as social media, email, and mobile applications have improved user engagement, libraries still face challenges including inadequate funding, limited staff skills, technological constraints, and low user awareness.

The literature further shows that effective marketing and communication strategies contribute significantly to increased awareness and utilization of library resources. However, there is limited research focusing specifically on Makerere University Library. This study therefore seeks to address this gap by developing an appropriate marketing and communication strategy for the library.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter described the methodology that was used in conducting the study on developing a marketing and communication strategy for Makerere University Main Library. It outlined the research design, area of study, study population, sampling strategy, data collection methods and techniques, as well as ethical considerations. The purpose of this chapter was to explain how data was collected, analyzed, and interpreted in order to address the research objectives.

3.1 Research approach and design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. The mixed-methods approach is considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect quantitative data from library users regarding awareness, utilization, and communication preferences, while also obtaining qualitative insights from library staff and administrators concerning existing marketing and communication practices. The combination of the two approaches provided a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of current marketing and communication strategies at Makerere University Main Library.

The study employed a descriptive case study research design focusing on Makerere University Main Library. A case study design was appropriate because it allowed an in-depth investigation of a particular institution within its real-life context. The design enabled the researcher to examine the marketing and communication practices currently used by the library, assess their effectiveness, and identify areas requiring improvement.

The study was descriptive in nature because it sought to describe the current status of marketing and communication activities, users' awareness of library services, preferred communication channels, and levels of engagement with library resources. The descriptive design provided a clear picture of how library users interacted with available services and how information about these services is communicated.

The study was also exploratory because it aimed at investigating existing gaps and challenges affecting the promotion of library services. The exploratory aspect facilitated a deeper understanding of issues related to communication effectiveness, user engagement, and service visibility that may not be adequately documented. It further generated insights that inform the

development of an effective marketing and communication strategy for Makerere University Main Library.

The mixed-methods descriptive case study design was considered suitable because it enabled the collection of detailed, contextual, and reliable information necessary for achieving the study objectives and developing practical recommendations for improving library marketing and communication.

3.2 Study area

The study was conducted at Makerere University Main Library, located in Kampala, Uganda. The library is one of the main academic information centers of the university, providing access to a wide range of print and electronic resources to support teaching, learning, and research. The choice of this study area was appropriate because the library actively engaged in providing information services and communication to its users, making it a suitable setting for examining marketing and communication strategies.

3.3 Study population

The study population refers to the entire group of individuals who possess characteristics relevant to the research problem and from whom data can be collected. According to John W. Creswell (2014), a study population comprises all individuals who are relevant to the subject under investigation.

In this study, the target population comprised library users/Makerere university students and staff of Makerere University Main Library who were directly involved in, affected by, or knowledgeable about the library's marketing and communication activities. The Makerere University annual report, (2025) estimated the population of Makerere university Including students, academic and administrative staff that have access to library services to be 38,964. The study specifically focused on undergraduate students, postgraduate students, academic staff, researchers, library staff, and library administrators.

3.3.1 Sample size determination

The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table, which provides a standard method for estimating sample sizes for finite populations. With a total population of 38,964 respondents, the corresponding sample size was 380 respondents as illustrated in table 1 below.

Table 1: Distribution of the Sample Size by college population

Category	Sub-category	Population (N)	Sample (n)
CAES	Postgraduate	547	5
CAES	Undergraduate	2,861	28
CHUSS	Postgraduate	549	5
CHUSS	Undergraduate	7,061	69
CoCIS	Postgraduate	199	2
CoCIS	Undergraduate	5,101	50
CoNAS	Postgraduate	200	2
CoNAS	Undergraduate	1,254	12
CEES	Postgraduate	586	6
CEES	Undergraduate	5,809	57
CHS	Postgraduate	658	6
CHS	Undergraduate	848	8
CoVAB	Postgraduate	160	2
CoVAB	Undergraduate	582	6
School of Law	Postgraduate	85	1
School of Law	Undergraduate	1,466	14
CoBAMS	Postgraduate	612	6
CoBAMS	Undergraduate	7,424	72
CEDAT	Postgraduate	412	4
CEDAT	Undergraduate	1,621	16
Library Staff	Staff	87	1
Academic Staff	Staff	1,409	14
Administrative & Support Staff	Staff	473	5
TOTAL	Postgraduate	4,208	39
TOTAL	Undergraduate	32,787	322
TOTAL	Staff	1,969	20
GRAND TOTAL	**All Categories**	38,964	380

3.3.2 Undergraduate students

Undergraduate students formed the largest category of library users and were among the primary targets of the library's communication and marketing efforts. They frequently used library services for coursework, assignments, and examination preparation. Their participation in the study was important in assessing awareness levels, communication preferences, and the effectiveness of current promotional strategies used by the library.

Postgraduate students and researchers rely heavily on specialized information resources such as scholarly databases, electronic journals, institutional repositories, and research support services. This category was important because it provided insights into the accessibility and utilization of advanced academic resources and the effectiveness of communication channels used to promote them.

3.3.3 Academic staff

Academic staff members were also considered key stakeholders because they support teaching, learning, and research activities within the university. Their views were considered important in evaluating whether the library effectively provided available research support services, digital resources, and training opportunities. Academic staff were also considered because they influence students' use of library services through recommendations and course requirements.

3.3.4 Library staff and management

Library staff and administrators were directly involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating marketing and communication strategies within the library. They possessed detailed knowledge of existing promotional activities, communication tools, institutional policies, and the challenges affecting service promotion. Their inclusion provided the researcher with professional and administrative perspectives on the effectiveness of current marketing practices.

The study population was therefore considered appropriate because it included both the providers of communication strategies (library staff and management) and the recipients of communication messages (library users). This ensured a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of marketing and communication strategies in the library.

3.4 Sampling techniques

The study employed non-probability sampling techniques, specifically convenience sampling, purposive sampling, and snowball sampling. These techniques were considered appropriate because the study was qualitative in nature and sought in-depth information from participants with relevant experiences and knowledge.

3.4.1 Conveniences sampling

Convenience sampling was used to select undergraduate students, postgraduate students, and researchers who are readily available within the library during the period of data collection. This technique allowed the researcher to easily access respondents who actively interacted with library services and communication platforms.

The method was suitable because students were the major users of library services and therefore provided first-hand information regarding awareness of library resources, communication preferences, user satisfaction, and challenges experienced when accessing services. Convenience sampling also saved time and resources during data collection.

3.4.2 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select library staff and administrators who are directly involved in user services, communication, outreach, or library management. Participants were deliberately selected based on their expertise, roles, and knowledge relevant to the study objectives.

This technique was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to obtain detailed and reliable information from individuals who understood the planning, implementation, and evaluation of marketing and communication strategies within the library. It also allowed the collection of professional opinions regarding institutional challenges, policy issues, and possible improvements.

3.4.3 Snowball sampling

Snowball sampling was used to identify participants who possessed specialized knowledge or extensive experience with library services. Initial respondents recommended additional

participants such as active library users, student leaders, peer educators, or researchers who frequently used library resources.

This method was useful because it helped the researcher reach participants with rich information and diverse experiences related to library communication and service utilization. It also improved the depth and quality of data collected.

The combination of these sampling techniques was appropriate because the study sought to understand perceptions, experiences, and communication effectiveness rather than generate statistical generalizations.

3.5 Data collection methods

The study utilized both primary and secondary methods of data collection. Primary data was obtained from respondents through questionnaires, interviews, and observation, while secondary data was collected through a review of relevant documents. The use of multiple methods enabled the researcher to triangulate information and improve the credibility of the findings.

3.5.1 Questionnaire survey

Questionnaires were administered to undergraduate students, postgraduate students, researchers, and academic staff. The questionnaires collected information regarding awareness of library resources and services, frequency of library use, preferred communication channels, user satisfaction, and challenges affecting the utilization of library services. The questionnaire method was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect information from a relatively large number of respondents within a short period of time and facilitated quantitative analysis of user responses.

3.5.2 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with library administrators and selected library staff. The interviews provided an opportunity for respondents to express their views, experiences, and opinions regarding existing marketing and communication practices. Information was collected on communication strategies, promotional activities, institutional challenges, user engagement, and possible interventions for improving awareness and

utilization of library services. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to probe for additional information whenever necessary.

3.5.3 Observation

Observation was employed to obtain firsthand information regarding user interaction with library services and communication tools. The researcher observed the use of notice boards, promotional materials, digital communication platforms, and information displays within the library. Observation also enabled the researcher to assess users' engagement with library facilities and communication activities. This method supplemented information obtained through questionnaires and interviews by providing evidence from actual practice.

3.5.4 Document Review

Document review was conducted to obtain secondary information relevant to the study. Various documents including strategic plans, annual reports, communication policies, newsletters, promotional materials, social media content, and website information were reviewed. The reviewed documents provided useful background information regarding existing marketing and communication initiatives and helped validate information obtained from primary data sources.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected using structured questionnaires, interview guides, observation checklists, and document review checklists. The questionnaires facilitated the collection of standardized information from users, while interview guides ensured consistency during interviews with library staff and administrators. Observation and document review checklists enabled systematic recording of information relevant to the study objectives.

3.7 Data analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were employed. Quantitative data obtained from questionnaires was coded, entered, and analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, tables, and charts were used to summarize and present the findings. Qualitative data obtained from interviews, observations, and document reviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. The researcher transcribed the collected information, identified recurring patterns and themes, group similar responses

together, and interpreted the findings according to the study objectives. Major themes included awareness of library services, communication effectiveness, user engagement, marketing challenges, and preferred communication channels.

3.8 Validity and reliability of research instruments

3.8.1 Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which research instruments accurately measure what they are intended to measure. To ensure validity, the data collection instruments were reviewed by the project supervisor and experts in library and information science before data collection commenced. Their comments and recommendations were incorporated into the final instruments in order to improve clarity, relevance, and adequacy in addressing the study objectives.

3.8.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of research instruments in generating dependable results. A pilot study was conducted among respondents who were not be included in the actual study. The pilot study enabled the researcher to assess the clarity, consistency, and suitability of the instruments. Necessary modifications were made before the instruments were administered to the study participants.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed throughout the study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research and their consent was obtained before participation. Confidentiality of the information provided by respondents was maintained, and data collected was used strictly for academic purposes. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were free to withdraw at any stage without any consequences. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from Makerere University Main Library management and relevant university authorities. The researcher also ensured that respondents were not exposed to any form of physical, psychological, or emotional harm during the study.

3.10 Summary

This chapter presented the methodology that was used in conducting the study. It described the research design, study area, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods, data collection instruments, data analysis procedures, validity and reliability measures, and ethical considerations. The methodology provided a systematic framework for collecting and analyzing data necessary for developing an effective marketing and communication strategy for Makerere University Main Library.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the findings of the study on the marketing and communication practices of Makerere University Main Library (MULIB). The findings were organized according to the study objectives and were presented using descriptive and inferential statistics, complemented by qualitative data from key informant interviews where appropriate. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize the respondents' demographic characteristics and responses on marketing and communication practices, challenges, awareness, utilization of library services, and preferred communication channels. Inferential statistics, specifically the Chi-square test, were used to examine the association between the source of information and users' awareness of library services. Qualitative data obtained from key informant interviews were analyzed thematically and were used to support and explain the quantitative findings. The chapter also presented the proposed marketing and communication strategy developed from the study findings to enhance the visibility, awareness, and utilization of library services at Makerere University Main Library.

4.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The findings from the study involved 380 respondents including undergraduate students, postgraduate students, lecturers, and members of Library staff. Information on respondents' gender, age, category, frequency of library use, and primary purpose for using the library was collected to provide a profile of the study participants. These characteristics were considered important because they influenced library use patterns, awareness of library services, and preferences for communication and marketing channels. The distribution of respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (N = 380)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	166	43.7
	Female	214	56.3
Age (years)	Below 20	11	2.9
	21–25	326	85.8
	26–30	27	7.1
	Above 30	16	4.2
Category of Respondent	Undergraduate student	347	91.3
	Postgraduate student	26	6.8
	Lecturer	3	0.8
	Staff	4	1.1
Frequency of Library Use	Daily	100	26.3
	Weekly	92	24.2
	Monthly	45	11.8
	Rarely	143	37.6
Primary Purpose for Using the Library	Studying/Reading	197	51.8
	Research purposes	118	31.1
	Accessing e-resources/databases	24	6.3
	Group discussions	22	5.8
	Borrowing books	9	2.4
	Internet access	8	2.1
	Coursework	1	0.3
	Never used the library	1	0.3

Source: Field Data (2026)

The study findings in Table 2 highlighted that female respondents constituted the majority, while males also had substantial representation, indicating that the study captured views from both genders. This balanced participation enhanced the reliability of the findings by incorporating perspectives from diverse library users.

Regarding age, respondents were predominantly within the young adult university-age category, showing that the study largely reflected the views of the main student population. Respondents below the typical university age and those above the mature student category formed smaller groups, reflecting their limited representation among library users.

With respect to respondent category, undergraduate students formed the largest proportion, reflecting their dominance within the university population and their frequent interaction with library services. Postgraduate students, academic staff, and other user categories were also represented, ensuring that the study captured perspectives from key library stakeholders.

The findings further revealed variations in library usage patterns. Respondents who rarely used the library formed the largest group, followed by those who accessed library services more frequently, while monthly users represented a smaller proportion. This indicates that although some users regularly engage with library services, a considerable number still have limited interaction with the library. The finding highlights the need for strengthened marketing and communication strategies to encourage increased utilization of library resources and services.

Concerning the main purpose of library use, studying and reading emerged as the leading reason, followed by research activities, demonstrating the important role of the library in supporting academic learning and scholarly work. Few respondents reported using the library for other academic purposes or having limited interaction with library services. This suggests that while the library remains an important academic resource, there is a need to increase awareness and promote the use of specialized services such as electronic resources, research support, and information services among the university community.

4.2 Current marketing and communication practices of Makerere University Main Library

The findings indicated that slightly more than half of the respondents were not aware of any marketing or promotional activities carried out by the library, while the remaining respondents reported awareness of existing promotional efforts. (Figure 1).

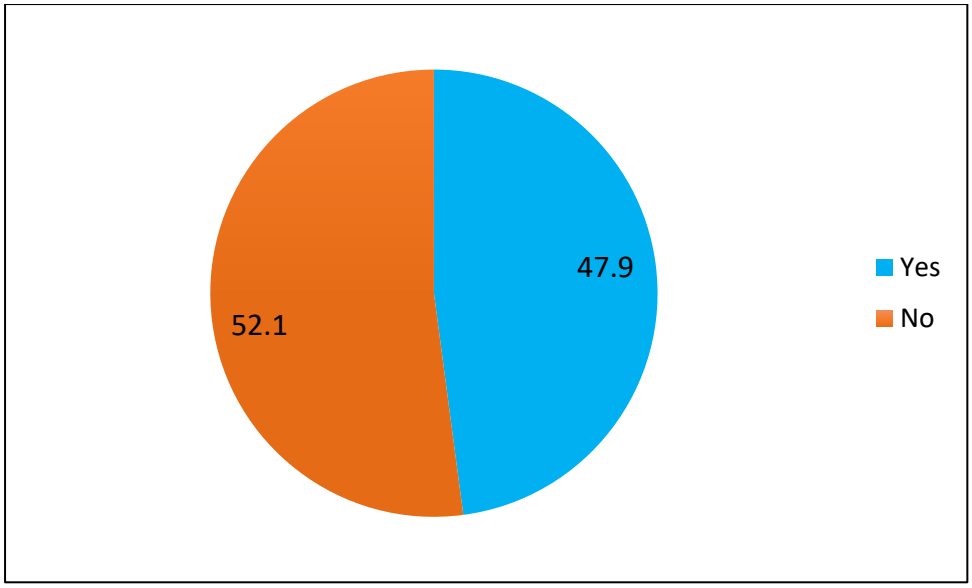


Figure 1: Awareness of marketing/promotional activities for the Makerere University Main Library

This suggests that although promotional activities exist, they are not sufficiently visible or effectively communicated to a large proportion of users, which limits their impact on user engagement. This finding aligns with Ayiah & Tamakloe, (2023), who noted that academic libraries often experience low user awareness of services due to ineffective communication strategies, particularly weak use of digital platforms and promotional channels preferred by modern users.

The study further explored how users received information about library services at Makerere University Main Library (Table 3). The findings showed that friends and classmates were the most common sources of information, followed by social media platforms. Other sources included notice boards, the library website, emails, and orientation programmes. A small number of respondents indicated that they rarely or never encountered information about library services. These findings suggest that informal peer communication plays a significant role in sharing library information, while official communication channels such as emails, websites, and orientation programmes require further strengthening to improve service visibility.

Regarding the effectiveness of library communication methods, the findings revealed mixed perceptions among respondents. While many users considered the existing communication approaches effective, some remained uncertain or viewed them as ineffective. This indicates

that although the library has established communication mechanisms, there is a need to improve consistency, accessibility, and coordination of communication strategies to ensure that information reaches all user groups effectively. This distribution suggests that while communication efforts are generally perceived positively by many users, there is still a significant group of users who are either unconvinced or dissatisfied with the effectiveness of current communication approaches. This finding aligns with Kumar & Ihejirika, (2023), who reported that the adoption of digital and social media platforms enhances library visibility and improves user engagement, leading to generally positive perceptions of communication effectiveness. However, they noted that benefits are often not uniformly experienced by all users. In contrast, Ihejirika et al., (2021) observed that many academic libraries still struggle with ineffective communication due to weak promotion strategies and limited integration of digital tools, which results in lower user engagement and mixed perceptions of effectiveness.

In terms of services most promoted by the library, the findings showed that electronic resources and databases were the most commonly recognized promoted services, while borrowing services received the least recognition among respondents. A notable number of respondents were uncertain about the services promoted by the library, indicating gaps in communication clarity and limited awareness of some available library services. This highlights the need for more comprehensive promotional efforts to ensure that users are informed about the full range of library resources and services. These findings both align with and extend the observations of Haq, (2025) and Mubofu, (2026), who emphasized that academic libraries increasingly prioritize digital and research-oriented services in their marketing due to their central role in supporting teaching and scholarly output. Similarly, Bentil & Chawner, (2021) noted that libraries tend to promote electronic resources more actively than traditional services because digital platforms are easier to advertise and align with users' growing preference for online access.

However, the presence of a sizeable proportion of respondents who were unsure of promoted services suggests a breakdown between promotion and user reception. This implies that while the library may be emphasizing high-value academic services such as databases and research support, the communication may not be sufficiently segmented or repetitive across different user groups. As a result, awareness becomes concentrated among more active or digitally engaged users, while less engaged users remain uninformed.

This pattern may be explained by the information diffusion gap commonly observed in academic libraries, where promotional efforts are technically present but fail to achieve full penetration due to reliance on passive channels (e.g., websites, notices) rather than integrated, multi-channel engagement strategies as highlighted by Ajani et al., (2022).

Table 3: Current Marketing and Communication Practices at Makerere University Main Library (N = 380)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Sources of information about library services	Friends/Classmates	118	31.1
	Social media	90	23.7
	Notice boards	67	17.6
	Library website	53	13.9
	Emails	26	6.8
	Orientation programs	20	5.3
	Haven't really seen information	1	0.3
	Rare	1	0.3
Effectiveness of communication methods	Very effective	99	26.1
	Effective	136	35.8
	Neutral	96	25.3
	Ineffective	43	11.3
	Very ineffective	3	0.8
Most promoted library services	E-resources/databases	88	23.2
	Research support services	87	22.9
	Internet services	65	17.1
	Reference services	41	10.8
	Borrowing services	38	10.0
	Not sure	61	16.1
Frequency of communication	Frequently	107	28.2
	Very frequently	88	23.2
	Occasionally	95	25.0
	Rarely	81	21.3
	Never	9	2.4
Satisfaction with communication	Very satisfied xx	93	24.5
	Satisfied	134	35.3

	Neutral	119	31.3
	Dissatisfied	26	6.8
	Very dissatisfied	7	1.8

Source: Field Data (2026)

The findings showed that library users received communication about library services at varying frequencies. While some respondents indicated that they frequently received information from the library, others reported receiving communication occasionally or rarely, with a small proportion indicating that they had never received any communication. This suggests that although communication mechanisms existed at Makerere University Main Library, they were not consistently reaching all users, creating gaps in awareness of library services and resources.

These findings are consistent with Rysavy et al. (2021), who emphasized that regular communication through digital platforms such as emails and text messages improves user awareness and engagement with library services. Similarly, Ihejirika et al. (2021) noted that libraries that strategically use social media and other digital platforms achieve wider outreach and stronger user engagement. Therefore, strengthening coordinated and consistent communication channels would enhance the visibility and utilization of library services.

The findings were consistent with those of Adetayo (2023), who reported that academic libraries required regular and timely communication to keep users informed and engaged. Adetayo (2023) further noted that irregular communication reduced users' awareness of available services and opportunities, thereby limiting the effective utilization of library resources. Similarly, Ahmed and Rafiq (2025) reported that successful library marketing depended on consistent and targeted communication through multiple digital platforms rather than occasional information sharing. For Makerere University Library, these findings imply the need to strengthen an integrated communication strategy by consistently utilizing email, social media, the library website, and other digital platforms to reach all users. Improving the regularity and inclusiveness of communication would enhance user awareness, increase the utilization of library resources and services, and improve the effectiveness of the library's marketing efforts.

With respect to satisfaction levels, the findings indicated generally positive perceptions of library communication services among respondents. Most users expressed satisfaction with

the communication approaches used by the library, while others remained neutral or expressed dissatisfaction. The considerable number of neutral responses suggests that some users may not be fully engaged or may have limited exposure to library communication initiatives. This indicates the need for more targeted, consistent, and user-focused communication strategies to improve engagement and satisfaction among all library users.

4.3 Challenges in accessing information about library services

The findings showed that the major challenge affecting access to library information was inadequate awareness campaigns, followed by limited internet access and poor communication channels. Other challenges included complexity of information systems and infrequent updates of library information. These findings indicate that limited promotion and ineffective communication mechanisms hinder users' ability to access and utilize available library resources and services. Therefore, strengthening awareness campaigns and improving communication channels would enhance information accessibility among library users.

These findings suggested that the main problem was not the absence of library systems, but rather weak user sensitization and limited outreach strategies. This finding was consistent with Ajani et al. (2022), who observed that academic libraries often struggled with user awareness despite having digital systems in place, largely due to inadequate integration of awareness campaigns into routine library services. Similarly, Ihejirika et al. (2021) noted that libraries that failed to sustain social media and outreach communication experienced low visibility of services, even when resources were available.

However, the Makerere findings extended these studies by showing that infrastructural issues such as limited internet access (25.0%) also played a significant role. This partially contrasted with Bentil and Chawner (2021), who emphasized that electronic resource usage is primarily influenced by system availability and management rather than access constraints in most academic settings. In the context of Makerere University, both communication and infrastructure barriers were jointly influential, suggesting a more complex access environment than previously reported in some studies.

The findings from Makerere University Library showed that 68.2% of respondents believed that the library adequately promoted its services and resources, while 31.8% felt that

promotion was inadequate. This indicated that although promotional efforts were generally appreciated, a substantial minority still perceived gaps in visibility and outreach.

These results reinforce findings from Edith (2025) who stressed the importance of consistent library marketing through visibility, communication strategy, and an ongoing relationship with users as components to effective library marketing. The generally favourable response from the minority of users indicates Makerere University Library has made some advances in the promotion of its services using digital media and outreach through institutional communication channels. However, the existence of a small number of users who felt that the promotional efforts were inadequate suggests that there may be inconsistencies in the original definitions of reach and target audience.

In contrast to this view, Al-abdallah and Ababakr (2025) highligted that digital marketing communications (through the use of digital media tools) when adequately developed and executed have substantially increased the awareness of students about the institutions and enhance the visibility of those institutions. The findings at Makerere University Library partially supported this view since the existence of a fairly substantial number of users indicating insufficient promotion, it would lead to the conclusion that digital marketing efforts alone have not provided the uniform coverage necessary for library marketing.

The findings revealed that lack of timely information affected users' access and utilization of library services. Most respondents indicated that delays or absence of timely information influenced their engagement with library services, while a smaller proportion reported no significant effect. This suggests that timely communication is an important factor in improving user awareness and interaction with library resources.

These findings are supported by Rysavy et al. (2021), who established that regular and timely communication through channels such as emails and text messages enhances user engagement with academic library services. Similarly, Ahmed and Rafiq (2025) noted that timely dissemination of information, including targeted updates, improves access to relevant resources and supports effective use of library services among researchers. Therefore, Makerere University Main Library should strengthen timely communication through reliable and accessible channels to improve user engagement.

In contrast to the Makerere findings, Bentil and Chawner (2021) posited that the primary determinants of resources used in an academic library are availability of those resources and the user's ability to successfully perform their required tasks. The Makerere findings provided evidence that the timeliness of communication is a principal determinant of how frequently and how intensively the user used resources from the library.

Table 4: Challenges in accessing information about Library Services

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Challenges in accessing library information	Lack of awareness campaigns	126	33.2
	Limited internet access	95	25.0
	Poor communication channels	87	22.9
	Complexity of information systems	39	10.3
	Infrequent updates	33	8.7
Adequacy of library promotion	Yes	259	68.2
	No	121	31.8
Effect of lack of timely information on library use	Greatly affects usage	184	48.4
	Slightly affects usage	161	42.4
	Does not affect usage	33	8.7
	Missing response	2	0.5

The findings showed that users experienced varying levels of difficulty when accessing library information. Most respondents indicated that they encountered challenges occasionally, while others experienced difficulties rarely or frequently. A smaller proportion reported experiencing challenges very often, whereas only a few users had never faced difficulties. These findings suggest that although library information services were accessible to many users, some barriers still existed, affecting smooth access and utilization of library resources. This highlights the need for improved information organization, user support, and communication strategies to enhance accessibility.

These results suggested that although access challenges were not constant for all users, they were frequent enough to affect a majority of the library users at least occasionally. This pattern implied that information access issues were intermittent but widespread, pointing to systemic rather than isolated challenges within the library information environment.

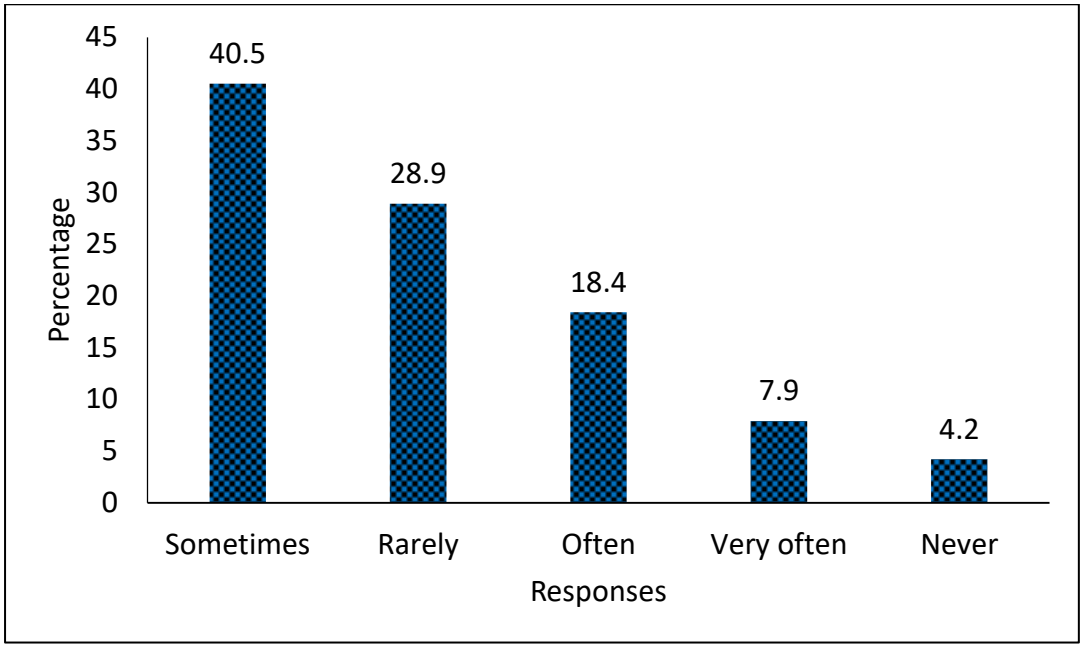


Figure 2: Frequency of difficulties in accessing library information

4.4 Awareness of Library Services at Makerere University Library

Figure 3 presented findings on users' awareness of different library services at Makerere University Library. During data collection, respondents indicated that they were more familiar with services that they frequently accessed, particularly internet services, electronic resources/online databases, and research support services. Many users explained that these services were easier to notice because they were commonly promoted through the library website, online platforms, and during academic activities such as research training and information literacy sessions. Some respondents mentioned that access to online databases had increased their awareness of electronic library services because they regularly used them for assignments, coursework, and research purposes.

Respondents also reported being aware of borrowing and circulation services, which they associated with the traditional role of the library in providing access to physical reading materials. Several users explained that they learned about borrowing procedures through

library orientations and their interactions with library staff. However, reference services were reported as less familiar to some users. Participants indicated that although reference assistance was available, it was not widely promoted, and many students were unsure about the specific support provided by reference librarians, such as assistance with literature searches, information retrieval, and academic research guidance. Some respondents suggested that increased awareness campaigns, clearer communication about available services, and more frequent engagement between librarians and users would improve visibility and utilization of reference services.

The findings showed that Makerere University Library users had higher awareness of core library services such as internet services, electronic resources, and borrowing services, which are frequently used for academic purposes. This agrees with Ajani et al. (2022), who observed that academic libraries often record higher awareness levels for services that are integrated into students' daily learning activities. Conversely, the lower awareness of reference services indicated limited promotion and visibility of specialized academic support services. Similarly, Baayel and Asante (2019) found that services used less frequently tend to have lower awareness among users due to limited exposure and interaction.

Atuase & Maluleka (2026) noted that there should be a uniform level of awareness of all library services through effective marketing; however, this was not achieved uniformly at Makerere. The findings indicate that the level of awareness was greatly affected by the frequency of use rather than through systematic promotion. It appears that, although reference services are essential for academic purposes, they are inadequately promoted. In turn, the Makerere University Library needs to focus on providing user education and target sensitization to help increase awareness of specialized services and enable equal utilization of all library services.

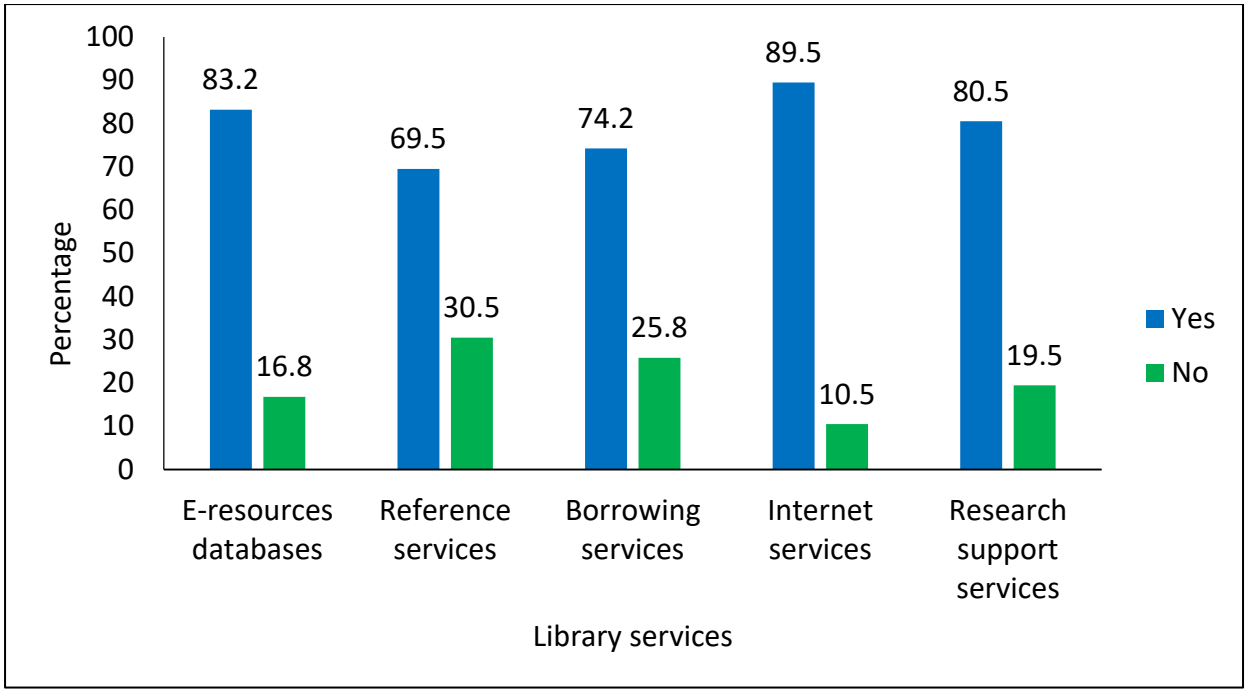


Figure 3: Awareness of Library Services at Makerere University Library

4.4.1 Association between source of information and overall awareness of library services

The results showed that students' awareness of library services varied depending on the sources through which they received information. Respondents who relied on social media and friends or classmates generally demonstrated higher awareness levels, indicating that digital and peer-based communication channels played an important role in influencing users' knowledge of library services.

Students who obtained information through official channels such as notice boards and the library website also showed relatively higher awareness, suggesting that institutional communication platforms contributed positively to service visibility. Similarly, email communication and orientation programmes supported awareness, although their reach appeared to be more limited compared with other channels.

However, respondents who rarely received or had not encountered information about library services were more likely to demonstrate lower awareness levels. The Chi-square test revealed a statistically significant relationship between the source of library information and users' awareness levels ($\chi^2 = 68.781$, df = 40, p = 0.003), indicating that communication

channels significantly influenced awareness of available library services. This implies that effective and consistent communication through diverse channels is essential for improving user awareness and engagement with library resources.

Table 5: Association between source of information and overall awareness of library services

Source of Information about library services	**Students' overall awareness of available library services**					
	High	**Low**	**Moderate**	**Very High**	**Very Low**	**Total**
Emails	0	11	2	8	5	26
Friends/Classmates	1	29	24	44	14	118
Library website	0	22	4	15	12	53
Notice boards	1	20	2	20	22	67
Orientation programmes	0	8	1	10	1	20
Rare	0	0	0	1	0	1
Social media	1	22	14	38	15	90
Chi-Square Value						**χ^2 = 68.781**
Degrees of Freedom (df)						**40**
p-value (Asymp. Sig.)						**0.003**

4.5 Suggested measures and strategies for improving library communication at Makerere University Library

The table 6 was used to present consolidated findings on the measures, strategies, communication channels, and approaches suggested by respondents to improve the promotion and communication of library services at Makerere University Library.

With regard to measures for improving promotion, respondents emphasized the need for more awareness campaigns and orientation programmes as the most effective intervention. This was followed by increased use of social media platforms and regular updates on library services. The findings suggest that users at Makerere University Library value continuous sensitisation and active engagement strategies, indicating the need for stronger outreach initiatives alongside existing communication systems.

According to recent studies, it is critical for academic libraries to continually engage and actively pursue users (Haq 2025). Effective library service delivery takes into account the

importance of both regular outreach (Edith 2025) and engagement via a proactive, user-centric marketing approach (e.g., regular campaigns designed to raise awareness among students), thereby demonstrating the need for continued support for both types of engagement. As found by Al-abdallah & Ababakr (2025), digital/social media marketing provides an avenue for increased awareness of library services when combined with high levels of accessibility, interactivity, and engagement. Nesterenko et al. (2023) identified a trend among academic libraries towards using social media for engaging with their users, due to the inadequacy of traditional communication channels for digitally native users.

The relatively low utilisation of official library websites and email communication indicates that Makerere University Library does not consider these channels effective for promoting library services, as stated by Hamad (2022), who indicated that institutional digital/online platforms continue to be relevant when regularly updated and integrated into comprehensive communication strategies.

In terms of strategies for improving awareness of library services, social media campaigns (38.2%) and combined or mixed communication strategies (32.3%) were most preferred. This indicated that respondents within the study area valued both standalone digital platforms and integrated communication approaches that combine multiple methods such as orientation sessions, email alerts, workshops, and visual communication tools. Traditional approaches such as posters and workshops were comparatively less preferred, reflecting a shift towards more interactive and technology-enabled communication practices among library users at Makerere University.

This finding is consistent with Yoesoep (2024), who noted that interactive marketing strategies that integrate multiple communication channels are more effective in enhancing user engagement than single-channel approaches. Similarly, Li et al. (2023) emphasized that modern library marketing increasingly relies on integrated digital communication systems to strengthen reach and user responsiveness.

The comparatively lower preference for traditional approaches such as posters and workshops suggested a clear shift among users toward more interactive and technology-enabled communication practices. This aligns with Şahin and Dirsehan (2023), who observed that users in digital environments tend to respond more positively to dynamic, real-time communication channels than static information dissemination methods.

Regarding preferred communication channels, WhatsApp emerged as the most preferred platform, followed by the library website and email. A considerable proportion of respondents recommended the use of multiple integrated communication channels, indicating that no single platform could effectively reach all library users. This highlighted the need for a blended communication approach that combines formal institutional channels with widely used digital platforms.

Regarding ways of improving communication effectiveness, respondents preferred a comprehensive approach involving regular updates, clear information, visual content, and interactive communication. These findings suggest that Makerere University Library should adopt a coordinated communication framework that enhances user engagement and ensures wider access to information about library services.

Table 6: Suggested measures, strategies, communication channels, and approaches to improve Library Communication at Makerere University

Category	Item	Frequency	Percent (%)
Measures to improve promotion	Conduct more awareness campaigns and orientation programmes	127	33.4
	Increase use of social media platforms	101	26.6
	Provide regular updates about library services	82	21.6
	Increase interaction between library staff and users	26	6.8
	Improve library website and online systems	20	5.3
	Strengthen email and digital communication	18	4.7
Strategies to improve awareness	Social media campaigns	145	38.2
	Orientation sessions	46	12.1
	Email/SMS alerts	31	8.2
	Posters and notice boards	19	5.0
	Workshops and seminars	16	4.2
	Combined/mixed strategies	123	32.3
Communication channels to prioritize	WhatsApp	113	29.7
	Library website	54	14.2
	Email	34	8.9
	X (Twitter)	13	3.4
	SMS	5	1.3
	Facebook/Instagram	11	2.9
	Multiple channels combined	150	39.6

Approach to improve effectiveness	All of the above	104	27.4
	More frequent updates	77	20.3
	Simpler messages	52	13.7
	Use of visual content	46	12.1
	Interactive platforms	16	4.2
	Combined approaches	85	22.3

CHAPTER FIVE: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR MAKERERE UNIVERSITY MAIN LIBRARY (MULIB)

5.1 Introduction

Makerere University Main Library (MULIB) is a critical academic support institution responsible for providing information resources and services that facilitate teaching, learning, research, and innovation at Makerere University. As one of the leading university libraries in Uganda, MULIB supports a diverse population comprising undergraduate students, postgraduate students, academic staff, researchers, and administrative personnel through access to print collections, electronic databases, institutional repositories, research support services, reference services, internet facilities, and user education programmes.

This Marketing and Communication Strategy was therefore developed to guide MULIB in improving the visibility, accessibility, and utilization of its services. The strategy provides a framework for strengthening internal coordination, enhancing digital communication, improving user engagement, promoting underutilized services, and establishing mechanisms for continuous monitoring and improvement.

5.2 Background and Rationale for the Strategy

Academic libraries globally have shifted from being passive providers of information resources to becoming active promoters of knowledge services. Modern university libraries are required not only to acquire and provide information resources but also to actively communicate their value to users. This transformation is particularly important in institutions such as Makerere University, where users have diverse information needs and increasing reliance on digital resources.

MULIB has invested significantly in electronic resources, digital platforms, research support services, and information infrastructure (Namugera, 2025). However, the value of these investments can only be realized when students, researchers, and academic staff are aware of available services and are able to effectively utilize them. The study findings indicated that awareness was high for commonly used services such as internet services (89.5%) and electronic resources/databases (83.2%), but lower for specialized services such as reference services (69.5%). This indicates that services that require active promotion and user engagement need greater attention.

The strategy therefore recognized communication as a core library function rather than an occasional activity. It proposed an integrated approach where digital communication, direct user engagement, promotional activities, and institutional collaboration work together to ensure that every category of library user receives relevant, timely, and accessible information.

5.3 Vision, Mission and Strategic Goal

5.3.1 Vision

To establish Makerere University Main Library as a highly visible, digitally connected, and user-centered academic information institution whose services are effectively communicated and fully utilized by the university community.

5.3.2 Mission

To enhance awareness, accessibility, and utilization of library resources and services through coordinated marketing, innovative communication approaches, stakeholder engagement, and continuous improvement.

5.3.3 Strategic Goal

To develop and implement an integrated marketing and communication system that improves awareness, strengthens user engagement, and increases utilization of Makerere University Main Library services and resources.

5.4 Strategic objectives

The Marketing and Communication Strategy aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To establish a coordinated institutional framework for planning and implementing library marketing and communication activities.
2. To improve awareness of library resources and services among undergraduate students, postgraduate students, academic staff, and researchers.
3. To strengthen digital communication platforms for effective dissemination of library information.

4. To promote underutilized library services, particularly research support services, reference services, and electronic resources.
5. To enhance user engagement through interactive communication and feedback mechanisms.
6. To establish monitoring and evaluation systems for assessing the effectiveness of library communication activities.

5.5 Target audience

The primary target audience comprises undergraduate students**,** who require regular information on library services, electronic resources, borrowing procedures, and study support. Communication should primarily utilize orientation programmes, WhatsApp, social media, and other interactive digital platforms. Postgraduate students and researchers should receive targeted communication on research databases, institutional repositories, scholarly publishing, and research support services through email, research workshops, and departmental engagements. Academic staff should be regularly informed about research support services, information literacy programmes, and electronic resources to strengthen their role in promoting library services to students. University management and other stakeholders should receive periodic reports highlighting library achievements, service utilization, user satisfaction, and the library's contribution to the University's teaching, learning, and research mission to support informed decision-making and continued institutional support.

5.6 Strategic marketing and communication approaches

5.6.1 Establishment of a Library Marketing and Communication Unit

The study findings demonstrated that communication activities were not sufficiently coordinated, resulting in inconsistent messaging and limited visibility of some services. To address this challenge, MULIB should establish a dedicated Marketing and Communication Unit responsible for coordinating all promotional activities. The unit should function as the central coordination point for library communication by working with ICT, reference services, circulation, research support sections, and university communication offices. It should ensure that all library sections communicate using consistent messages, appropriate branding, and planned communication schedules.

The unit should be responsible for:

- Developing annual marketing and communication plans.
- Preparing promotional calendars.
- Coordinating awareness campaigns.
- Managing library social media content.
- Producing promotional materials.
- Collecting and analyzing communication performance data.

Responsible Unit: University Librarian and Library Management.

5.6.2 Digital Communication Strategy

Digital communication should form a major component of the MULIB marketing and communication strategy because university users increasingly depend on online platforms for accessing information. The digital communication strategy should ensure that library information reaches users through platforms they frequently use while maintaining official institutional communication standards. Digital platforms should not only be used for announcing events but should become interactive spaces where users can access information, ask questions, receive guidance, and provide feedback for instance WhatsApp should be incorporated as a key communication platform because it is widely used among Makerere University students and provides an affordable and interactive method of reaching users. MULIB should establish official WhatsApp communication channels managed by designated library staff.

The platform should be used to:

- Announce new electronic resources and databases.
- Notify users about library training sessions and workshops.
- Share deadlines, service updates, and operational changes.
- Provide quick responses to frequently asked questions.
- Share short instructional materials such as videos, posters, and user guides.

Different WhatsApp groups may be established for specific user categories, including undergraduate students, postgraduate students, researchers, and academic staff, to ensure that users receive information relevant to their needs.

5.6.3 Social Media Marketing Strategy

Social media platforms should be strategically used to increase the visibility of MULIB services and create continuous engagement with users. Although social media was among the major information sources identified by respondents, its current potential should be expanded beyond occasional announcements.

MULIB should develop a structured social media calendar that includes:

- Weekly highlights of available library services.
- Database and e-resource awareness campaigns.
- Research support tips.
- Library user success stories.
- Staff introductions to improve interaction between librarians and users.
- Announcements of workshops, training sessions, and exhibitions.
- Short educational content on information searching and academic integrity.

The social media strategy should focus on creating engaging and user-friendly content rather than only transmitting information. Visual content such as posters, short videos, infographics, and demonstrations should be prioritized because they improve message visibility among digitally oriented users.

Responsible Unit: Public Relations and Social Media Team.

5.6.4 Improvement of the MULIB Website

The library website should serve as the official and reliable source of information about library services. The study findings showed that although the website contributed to information dissemination (13.9%), its use was lower compared to informal sources and social media. This indicates the need to improve the website's visibility, accessibility, and usefulness.

The website should be redesigned to provide:

- Clear descriptions of all library services.
- Direct access links to electronic databases.
- Online library guides.

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).
- Training schedules.
- Research support information.
- Contact information for subject librarians.
- Online feedback forms.

The website should also be regularly updated to ensure that users access current and accurate information.

Responsible Unit: ICT and Systems Unit in collaboration with Library Marketing and Communication Unit.

5.6.5 Email Communication Enhancement

Although email was among the least reported sources of library information, it remains an important formal communication channel, particularly for academic staff, researchers, and postgraduate students.

MULIB should strengthen email communication through:

- Monthly library newsletters.
- Database update alerts.
- Research support announcements.
- Training invitations.
- New service notifications.

Email communication should be targeted according to user categories to prevent information overload and ensure relevance.

Responsible Unit: Library Administration and Marketing Communication Unit.

5.7 User Awareness and Outreach Strategy

The study identified inadequate awareness campaigns as one of the major challenges affecting access to library information. Respondents also emphasized the need for more awareness campaigns and orientation programmes to improve the promotion of library services. MULIB should therefore implement a continuous outreach programme to ensure

that all user groups receive timely and consistent information about available library services and resources.

5.7.1 Student Orientation Programme

MULIB should strengthen orientation programmes for new students by introducing both physical and digital library services. Orientation should cover library registration, use of the online catalogue, access to electronic resources, borrowing procedures, research support, citation management, and digital library platforms. These sessions should be conducted in collaboration with academic colleges to maximize participation.

Responsible Units: Reference Section, College Librarians, and Academic Departments.

5.7.2 Faculty and Departmental Outreach

The Library should conduct regular outreach to academic departments through database demonstrations, research support sessions, faculty meetings, and subject-specific information guides tailored to different disciplines. This will improve awareness and utilization of specialized library resources.

Responsible Units: Subject Librarians and College Library Coordinators.

5.7.3 Library Awareness Campaigns

MULIB should organize continuous awareness campaigns throughout the academic year, including library open days, information literacy programmes, database demonstrations, exhibitions, and **"Know Your Library"** campaigns. These activities should integrate both face-to-face and digital communication to maximize user engagement.

Responsible Unit: Library Marketing and Communication Unit.

5.8 Promotion of Underutilized Library Services and Stakeholder Engagement

The study found that awareness of library services varied across different service categories, with specialized services such as reference and research support being less well known than core services. MULIB should therefore implement targeted promotional activities to increase the visibility and utilization of underutilized services. This should include regular training on electronic resources and databases, promotion of newly acquired digital resources, online

tutorials, database user guides, and discipline-specific resource awareness. The Library should also strengthen the promotion of reference and research support services by highlighting research consultations, literature searching, citation management, research data support, academic writing assistance, and scholarly publishing guidance. Responsibility for these activities should rest with the Electronic Resources Section and the Reference and Research Support Sections.

To enhance the effectiveness of these initiatives, MULIB should strengthen collaboration with key university stakeholders, including University Management, the Directorate of ICT, the Public Relations Office, academic colleges, the Graduate School, and student leadership organizations. These partnerships will facilitate coordinated communication, improve information dissemination through established university channels, and increase awareness and utilization of library services across the university community.

5.9 Implementation Framework

Successful implementation of the marketing and communication strategy requires clear allocation of responsibilities, timelines, and performance expectations. The University Librarian and Library Management should provide overall leadership by establishing the Library Marketing and Communication Unit, approving annual marketing plans, and ensuring availability of necessary resources. The Marketing and Communication Unit should coordinate promotional activities, develop communication plans, and oversee implementation of awareness initiatives. The ICT and Systems Unit should continuously improve digital platforms, including the library website and online communication systems, while the Public Relations Team should manage social media engagement and digital content creation. The Reference and User Services Sections should conduct regular awareness campaigns, user training, and orientation programmes throughout the academic year. Progress of the strategy should be reviewed periodically by Library Management to ensure that activities remain aligned with institutional goals and user needs.

Table 7: Implementation Framework for the Marketing and Communication Strategy at Makerere University Library (MULIB)

Activity	Responsible Unit	Timeline
Establish Library Marketing and Communication Unit	University Librarian and Library Management	Within 3 months
Develop annual marketing plan	Marketing and Communication Unit	Every academic year
Improve website and digital platforms	ICT and Systems Unit	Continuous
Conduct awareness campaigns	Reference and User Services	Monthly
Manage social media campaigns	Public Relations Team	Weekly
Conduct user training programmes	Reference Section	Every semester
Evaluate communication effectiveness	Library Management	Annually

5.10 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Monitoring and evaluation are essential for assessing the effectiveness and sustainability of the marketing and communication strategy as highlighted in Table 8. MULIB should establish measurable indicators to track improvements in user awareness, digital engagement, resource utilization, communication effectiveness, and user satisfaction. This can be achieved through annual user surveys, website and social media analytics, library resource usage statistics, feedback mechanisms, and communication activity records. The findings from monitoring activities should be regularly reviewed by Library Management to identify successful interventions, address emerging challenges, and continuously improve marketing and communication approaches. This evidence-based approach will enable MULIB to make informed decisions and ensure that promotional activities effectively enhance awareness and utilization of library services across the university community.

Table 8: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the Marketing and Communication Strategy at Makerere University Library (MULIB)

Objective	**Indicator**	**Measurement Method**
Increase awareness	Percentage of users aware of services	Annual user surveys
Improve digital engagement	Website visits and social media interactions	Digital analytics
Increase resource utilization	Database usage statistics	Library usage reports
Improve satisfaction	User satisfaction levels	Feedback surveys
Strengthen communication	Frequency of updates	Communication records

5.11 Expected Outcomes of the Strategy

Successful implementation of the MULIB Marketing and Communication Strategy is expected to result in:

- Increased awareness of library resources and services among students, academic staff, and researchers.
- Improved utilization of electronic resources, research support services, and specialized library services.
- Stronger engagement between librarians and users.
- Increased effectiveness of digital communication platforms.
- Improved consistency and coordination of library messages.
- Enhanced visibility and recognition of MULIB's contribution to teaching, learning, and research.
- Development of a sustainable institutional culture where marketing and communication become continuous library functions.

5.12 Proposed Marketing and Communication Strategy Layout

The proposed marketing and communication strategy was developed based on the findings of the study conducted at Makerere University Library (Figure 4). The layout was designed to provide a coordinated framework through which library information would flow from management to users while ensuring continuous feedback and improvement. It was intended to address the communication gaps identified during the study, including inadequate awareness campaigns, inconsistent dissemination of information, and limited visibility of some library services. The framework integrated both administrative and operational functions to facilitate effective planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of library marketing and communication activities.

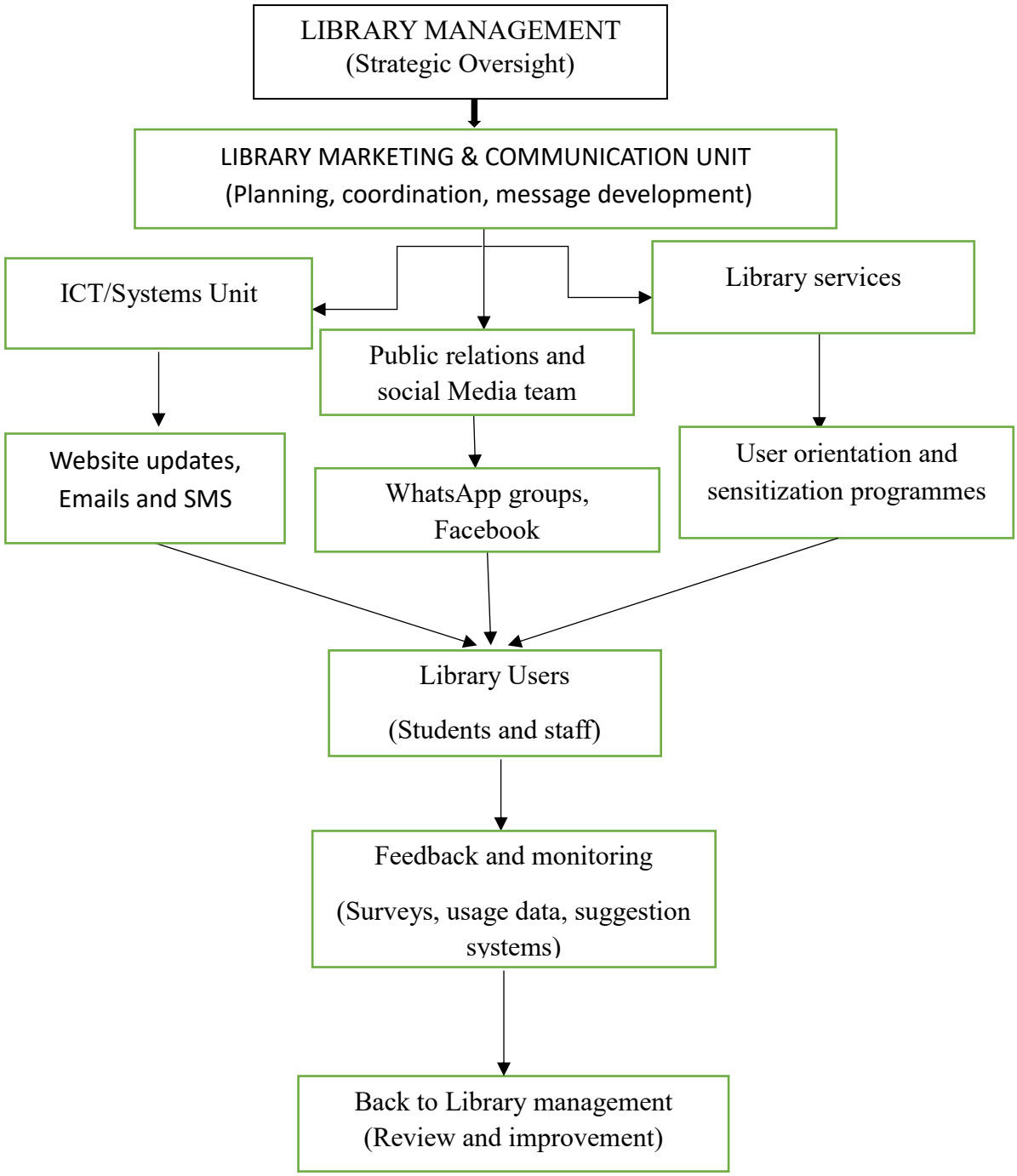


Figure 4: Layout of the Library Marketing and Communication Strategy

5.13 Conclusion

The Marketing and Communication Strategy provides Makerere University Main Library with a structured approach for improving service visibility, user awareness, and resource utilization. The strategy responds directly to challenges identified in the study, including

inadequate awareness campaigns, inconsistent communication, and limited promotion of specialized services.

Implementation of the strategy requires commitment from Library Management, library staff, ICT personnel, university communication offices, and other stakeholders. Through coordinated planning, effective use of digital platforms, continuous user engagement, and regular evaluation, MULIB can strengthen its position as a modern, accessible, and user-centered academic library that effectively supports Makerere University's mission of teaching, learning, research, and innovation.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study concluded that the effectiveness of marketing and communication at Makerere University Main Library is central to improving users' awareness and utilization of library services and resources. Although the library has established several communication channels, including social media, the library website, email, notice boards, and orientation programmes, these channels have not been fully coordinated to provide consistent and comprehensive outreach to all user groups. Consequently, a considerable proportion of users remained unaware of some library services and promotional activities despite the availability of valuable academic resources.

The findings further demonstrated that awareness and utilization of library services were influenced by the effectiveness of communication methods, the timeliness of information dissemination, and the communication channels used. Challenges such as inadequate awareness campaigns, poor communication channels, limited internet access, and inconsistent updates reduced the visibility of library services and limited user engagement. The study also established that users preferred integrated communication approaches that combine digital platforms, social media, face-to-face interactions, and regular awareness programmes to ensure wider coverage and greater accessibility.

Based on these findings, the study developed a proposed marketing and communication strategy that provides a coordinated framework for planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating library promotional activities. The strategy emphasizes centralized coordination, the integration of multiple communication channels, continuous user engagement, and regular monitoring and feedback mechanisms.

5.2. Recommendations

- Library Management should establish a Library Marketing and Communication Unit to coordinate, implement, and monitor all marketing and promotional activities across the library.
- The ICT and Systems Unit should strengthen the library website, email services, WhatsApp, and other digital communication platforms to ensure timely dissemination of information to users.

- The Public Relations and Social Media Team should increase the use of social media by regularly posting updates on library services, new resources, training opportunities, and upcoming events.
- Library Service Units should organize regular orientation programmes, user education sessions, exhibitions, and awareness campaigns throughout the academic year to improve users' knowledge of available services.
- Reference librarians and subject librarians should actively promote specialized services such as research support, reference services, institutional repositories, and electronic databases during user interactions.
- Library Management should establish continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms through user satisfaction surveys, website analytics, social media analytics, and library usage statistics to assess the effectiveness of communication activities.

- Makerere University Management should develop and approve a comprehensive Library Marketing and Communication Policy to guide all library communication and promotional activities.
- The University Council and University Management should allocate adequate financial, technological, and human resources to support the implementation of the library's marketing and communication strategy.
- The Directorate of ICT, in collaboration with Makerere University Main Library, should develop institutional guidelines for managing and updating digital communication platforms to ensure timely and consistent information dissemination.
- Makerere University Management should strengthen collaboration between the Main Library, Directorate of ICT, Public Relations Office, academic colleges, and student leadership to improve the dissemination of library information across the university.
- The Human Resource Directorate, in collaboration with Library Management, should provide continuous training for library staff in digital marketing, communication, customer relations, and social media management.

- Researchers and policy analysts should investigate the long-term effects of integrated marketing and communication strategies on library service utilization, user satisfaction, and academic performance in higher education institutions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LIBRARY STAFF

Dear Respondent,

We are students from Makerere University conducting a study on Marketing and Communication Strategies for Makerere University Main Library. The purpose of this interview is to gather information about the current marketing and communication practices, challenges faced, user awareness, and possible improvements. The information provided will be used strictly for academic purposes and treated confidentially.

Section A: Background Information

1.What is your position in the library?

2.How long have you worked at the library?

3.What are your major responsibilities?

4.Are you directly involved in marketing or communication activities of the library?

Section B: Current Marketing and Communication Practices

1.What marketing strategies does the library currently use to promote its services and resources?

2.Which communication channels are commonly used by the library?

3. How effective do you think these communication channels are?

4. Why do you think so?

5.How often does the library conduct promotional activities?

6.Does the library have a formal marketing or communication policy/plan?

7. Which library services are most promoted to users?

8.How does the library communicate new resources or services to users?

Section C: Challenges Affecting Promotion of Library Services

1.What challenges does the library face in marketing its services and resources?

2. Does the library have adequate funding for marketing activities?

3. Are there enough staff with marketing and communication skills?

4. How does technology affect library communication and promotion?

5. What challenges are faced when communicating with library users?

6. Do users respond positively to promotional activities? Explain.

7. How does competition from online information sources affect library usage?

Section D: User Awareness and Utilization of Library Resources

1.In your opinion, are users aware of the services and resources available in the library?

2.Which resources or services are most utilized by users?

3.Which resources/services are underutilized? Why?

4.How does the library assess user awareness and satisfaction?

5.Have marketing efforts improved library usage? Explain.

Section E: Proposed Communication and Marketing Channels

1.Which communication channels would you recommend for improving awareness of library services?

2.How can social media be better utilized by the library?

3.What strategies can improve user engagement with library services?

What recommendations would you give to improve library marketing and communication?

Do you think collaboration with students and lecturers can improve promotion of library services?

APPENDIX II: QUESTIONAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Introduction

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is intended to collect information for academic research on marketing and communication strategies used by Makerere University Main Library. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for academic purposes.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate answer or write where necessary.

Section A: Background Information

1. Gender
   ☐ Male
   ☐ Female

2. Age
   ☐ Below 20
   ☐ 21–25
   ☐ 26–30
   ☐ Above 30

3. Category of respondent
   ☐ Undergraduate student
   ☐ Postgraduate student
   ☐ Lecturer
   ☐ Staff
   ☐ Other ……

4. How often do you use the library?
   ☐ Daily
   ☐ Weekly
   ☐ Monthly
   ☐ Rarely

5. What is your primary purpose for using the library?

   ☐ Studying/Reading

   ☐ Accessing e-resources/databases

   ☐ Borrowing books

   ☐ Research purposes

   ☐ Internet access

   ☐ Group discussions

   ☐ Other (please specify) ……

Section B: Current Marketing and Communication Practices

6. How do you normally receive information about library services?

   ☐ Notice boards

   ☐ Social media

   ☐ Emails

   ☐ Friends/Classmates

   ☐ Orientation programs

   ☐ Library website

   ☐ Others ……

7. Are you aware of the marketing or promotional activities carried out by the library?

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

8. How effective are the library communication methods?

   ☐ Very effective

   ☐ Effective

   ☐ Neutral

   ☐ Ineffective

   ☐ Very ineffective

9. Which library services are most promoted?

   ☐ E-resources/databases

   ☐ Borrowing services

☐ Internet services

☐ Reference services

☐ Research support services

☐ Not sure

10. How frequently does the library communicate information about its services?

☐ Very frequently

☐ Frequently

☐ Occasionally

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

11. How satisfied are you with the library's communication of services and resources?

☐ Very satisfied

☐ Satisfied

☐ Neutral

☐ Dissatisfied

☐ Very dissatisfied

Section C: Challenges affecting promotion of library services

12. What challenges do you face in accessing information about library services?

☐ Poor communication channels

☐ Limited internet access

☐ Lack of awareness campaigns

☐ Infrequent updates

☐ Complexity of information systems

Other(please specify):……

13. Do you think the library adequately promotes its services and resources?

☐ Yes

☐ No

14. To what extent does lack of timely information affect your use of library services?
    - ☐ Greatly affects usage
    - ☐ Slightly affects usage
    - ☐ Does not affect usage
15. How often do you experience difficulties in accessing library information?
    - ☐ Very often
    - ☐ Often
    - ☐ Sometimes
    - ☐ Rarely
    - ☐ Never
16. How would you rate the effectiveness of the library's communication system?
    - ☐ Very effective
    - ☐ Effective
    - ☐ Neutral
    - ☐ Ineffective
    - ☐ Very ineffective
17. What is the level of coordination in the library's communication of services?
    - ☐ Very high
    - ☐ High
    - ☐ Moderate
    - ☐ Low
    - ☐ Very low
18. How satisfied are you with the availability of information about library services?
    - ☐ Very satisfied
    - ☐ Satisfied
    - ☐ Neutral
    - ☐ Dissatisfied
    - ☐ Very dissatisfied

Section D: Awareness and Utilization of Library Resources

19. Please indicate whether you are aware of the following library services:

Library Service	**Yes (☐)**	**No (☐)**
E-resources / Online databases	☐	☐
Reference services	☐	☐
Borrowing / circulation services	☐	☐
Internet services	☐	☐
Research support services	☐	☐

20. Which of the following library services do you use most often? (Tick one)

☐ E-resources / Online databases

☐ Borrowing / circulation services

☐ Internet services

☐ Reference services

☐ Research support services

21. How would you rate your use of library resources?

☐ Very high

☐ High

☐ Moderate

☐ Low

☐ Very low

22. Have library promotional activities influenced your use of library services?

☐ Yes

☐ No

23. How would you rate students' overall awareness of available library services?

☐ Very high

☐ High

☐ Moderate

☐ Low

☐ Very low

24. What measures do you suggest should be taken to address the challenges affecting the promotion and communication of library services?

☐ Increase use of social media platforms

☐ Conduct more awareness campaigns and orientation programs

☐ Provide regular updates about library services

☐ Improve the library website and online information systems

☐ Strengthen communication through emails and other digital platforms

☐ Increase interaction between library staff and users

☐ Other (please specify): …….

Section E: Proposed Communication and Marketing Channels

25. Which strategies do you think would improve awareness of library services?

    ☐ Social media campaigns

    ☐ Email/SMS alerts

    ☐ Orientation sessions

    ☐ Posters and notice boards

    ☐ Peer-to-peer promotion

    ☐ Workshops and seminars

26. Which communication channels should the library prioritize?

    ☐ WhatsApp

    ☐ Facebook

    ☐ X (Twitter)

    ☐ Instagram

    ☐ SMS

    ☐ Email

    ☐ Library website

27. What approach would best improve library communication effectiveness?
    - ☐ More frequent updates
    - ☐ Simpler messages
    - ☐ Use of visual content (videos/posters)
    - ☐ Interactive platforms
    - ☐ All of the above
28. What is the most effective way of increasing student engagement with library services?
    - ☐ Social media engagement
    - ☐ Library events and workshops
    - ☐ Student ambassadors
    - ☐ Incentives or rewards
    - ☐ Online forums
29. What is the most appropriate method for collecting user feedback?
    - ☐ Online surveys
    - ☐ Suggestion boxes
    - ☐ Social media platforms
    - ☐ Email feedback systems
30. How important is the role of students in promoting library services?
    - ☐ Very important
    - ☐ Important
    - ☐ Moderate
    - ☐ Low
    - ☐ Not important
31. How would you rate the effectiveness of low-cost marketing strategies used by the library?
    - ☐ Very effective
    - ☐ Effective
    - ☐ Neutral

☐ Ineffective

☐ Very ineffective

32. How would you rate the overall communication of the library?

☐ Very good

☐ Good

☐ Fair

☐ Poor

☐ Very poor

33. What measures do you suggest should be taken to improve the marketing and communication of library services?
34. What do you consider to be the main challenge affecting communication in the library, and what possible solution would you recommend?

Appendix III: Introductory Letter

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

P.O.Box 7062 Kampala Uganda
Email: info@cis.mak.ac.ug
URL: http://www.cis.mak.ac.ug

Tel: +256 - 392 - 000 - 180
Fax: +256 - 414 540 620
twitter: @cocismak
facebook: makcocis

COLLEGE OF COMPUTING & INFORMATION SCIENCES

EAST AFRICAN SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE (EASLIS)

1st June, 2026

The College Registrar
College of Natural Sciences
Makerere University
P. O. Box 7062
Kampala - Uganda

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER

This is to introduce to you the following students who are pursuing a Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) in Year III at the East African School of Library & Information Science under the College of Computing of Information Sciences, Makerere University.

1. Angayika Comfort	23/U/06192/PS
2. Katushabe Joselyn	23/U/09361/PS
3. Gastone Acwamu	23/U/04950/PS
4. Nafula Morine Ella	23/U/13020/PS
5. Tyai Eseza	23/U/18363/PS

As part of their degree programme, they are entitled to carry out a project under the course: BLS 3227: Information Science Project. The title of their project is "***Developing a Marketing and Communication Strategy for Makerere University Main Library.***"

The purpose of this communication is to request you to offer them the necessary assistance required.

Please note that all information provided to them will be used for academic purposes only.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Alice Gitta Kutyamukama
AG. HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

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