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Use of Social Media in Marketing Library Services at Lira University Library

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Abstract

This study investigated the Use of Social Media in Marketing Library Services at Lira University Library. The main issue addressed is the limited engagement of students with social media accounts, which affects their awareness of library services available via these platforms and, consequently impacts the quality of education. The study employed a mixed-methods approach with a convergent parallel design; the target population included final-year students at Lira University and some library staff. The sample size of 230 students for the quantitative component was determined using Yamane's simplified formula for sample size calculation while purposive sampling was selected for the qualitative component. Data collection involved structured, closed-ended questionnaires and in-depth, open-ended interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26, while qualitative interview data were transcribed and analysed thematically. The results revealed that although final-year students were aware of social media platforms, their level of engagement remained low. Facebook was the most frequently used platform for marketing library services. The findings also identified challenges such as insufficient staff skills in using social media tools, a lack of social media policies, inadequate funding, and unstable internet connectivity as major barriers to adopting social media for marketing library services. The study concluded that social media platforms can improve the visibility, accessibility, and engagement with library services. It recommended staff training, increased funding for the library, clearer policies on social media use, enhanced internet stability, and the ongoing maintenance of existing social media tools.

Subject Areas

Marketing Academic Libraries

Keywords

Academic Library, Social Media, Marketing, Uganda, Library Services

1. Introduction

Academic libraries (ALs) support universities, colleges, and related institutions by providing essential services to students, teachers, and staff. They align with institutional curricula, function as hubs of research and information, provide leadership, and leverage information technology to prepare individuals for knowledge-based economies [1]. The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), including the internet, video conferencing, and social media, has transformed how individuals and organisations access information and collaborate globally [2]. Within this shift, social media has redefined how libraries communicate with users, enabling faster, more engaging, and accessible interaction [3].

Traditionally, libraries relied on physical notices, newsletters, tours, and word-of-mouth to market services. While effective, these methods lacked the immediacy and reach of digital tools [4]. With ICT advancements and the predominance of younger, digitally active users, social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, X, and Pinterest now serve as vital channels for promoting resources and engaging remote users [5]. Social media enhances library marketing by supporting user engagement, professional networking, timely updates, information sharing, reference services, and effective two-way communication [6]. However, successful adoption requires skilled librarians. Challenges including limited IT skills, poor internet, lack of training, and weak policy frameworks have slowed uptake in many contexts [7]. Nevertheless, libraries increasingly recognise that social media presence not only supports marketing but also fosters community participation and user loyalty [8]. Thus, social media represents a dynamic strategy for enhancing user interaction, promoting services, and overcoming the constraints of traditional marketing. As academic libraries evolve in the digital era, effective social media use remains critical to meeting user expectations.

Social Media (SM) is defined as software-based technologies, websites and applications that create virtual spaces for users to share, receive, and interact with digital content within online networks [9]. [10] describe it as computer-based tools that enable individuals to share information, ideas, images, and videos within a network. In this study, SM is understood as web-based applications that enable users to create and exchange knowledge in real time, characterized by user-centricity, multi-functionality, and independence of time and location. Platforms of interest include Facebook, X, LinkedIn, and YouTube, analysed through frequency, purpose, and content type. The American Marketing Association (2017) defines marketing as the set of activities and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings of value to customers and society. Similarly, [11] frames marketing as creating and sustaining exchange relationships by attracting and retaining customers. Marketing within libraries is characterized by promotion, branding, product development, and user engagement [12]. Library services encompass circulation, interlibrary loans, reference support, acquisitions, user training, and technical services [13]. Marketing, in this context, involves strategic initiatives aimed at raising awareness, promoting services, connecting with users, and enhancing visibility and relevance.

This study was conducted at Lira University Library (LUL), a public academic library that plays a central role in supporting teaching, learning, and research. Lira University was established in 2009 as a constituent college of Gulu University and later gained autonomy in 2015 under Statutory Instrument No. 35, in accordance with the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (2001, amended 2006). The university is tasked with providing quality higher education, research, innovation, and knowledge dissemination, with the library at the heart of this mission. LUL branches namely; the main library, the faculty of medicine, the public health library, and an e-library at the teaching hospital offering services such as circulation, interlibrary loan, current awareness services, reference support, information literacy training, user management, acquisitions, and technical services. As a member of the Consortium of Uganda University Libraries (CUUL), it enables access to electronic databases that would otherwise be unaffordable independently. The library also collaborates with the university's IT department to ensure reliable connectivity for e-resources.

Despite these strengths, LUL faces staffing shortages and inadequate physical space relative to the rapidly growing student population. Furthermore, its location in Northern Uganda, a region that experienced over 20 years of civil war, makes its context unique. The conflict disrupted education and access to information, creating lingering developmental challenges. These realities underscore the need for innovative outreach strategies, such as social media, to enhance visibility, bridge information gaps, and extend the reach of library services to a diverse academic community.

Academic libraries are central to supporting teaching, learning, and research [14]. With higher education's digital shift, social media has become a low-cost, interactive, and wide-reaching tool for marketing services, particularly to digital-native students [15]. Platforms like Facebook, X, WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube can be used to share new acquisitions, promote resources, and engage users in real time, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (quality education). At Lira University Library, however, a gap exists between potential and practice. While the university embraces digital tools, the library's social media presence is inconsistent, limited, or in some cases non-existent. Consequently, many students remain unaware of available services, leading to underutilization. Without an effective social media marketing strategy, the library risks diminished relevance, poor user perceptions, and reduced contribution to academic success. Existing Ugandan studies such as those on Kyambogo University Library [16] and Hamu Mukasa Library at Uganda Christian University [17] highlight the value of social media for library marketing. However, limited research addresses younger public universities in Northern Uganda. This study contributes original insights by focusing on Lira University Library, a growing public institution with untapped potential in social media marketing.

Research questions

i) What are the different social media platforms used to market library services?

ii) What is the level of awareness and usage of library services among students

and staff in relation to library's social media presence?

iii) What challenges does Lira University Library face in adopting social media for marketing library services?

iv) What strategies or recommendations can be done to ensure effective use of social media in marketing library services at Lira University.

2. Literature Review

This study was grounded in Diffusion of Innovations Theory [18], which offers a framework for understanding how new technologies and practices are adopted and spread within organisations and among their users. The theory highlights five key attributes influencing adoption: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability, as well as the role of communication channels and adopter categories. Each of the study's objectives was guided by these principles. The first objective, to assess the current use of social media platforms by Lira University Library for marketing its services, aligns with the DOI concept of observability and relative advantage, as it aims to determine the extent of adoption and the visibility of its benefits within the institution. The second objective, to evaluate the level of awareness and usage of library services among students and staff in relation to the library's social media presence, reflects the role of communication channels and the diffusion process, illustrating how awareness spreads among adopter categories such as innovators, early adopters, and the majority. The third objective, to identify the challenges faced by Lira University Library in adopting social media for marketing library services, corresponds to complexity and compatibility, focusing on barriers such as technological skills, resources, or institutional support that hinder diffusion. Lastly, the fourth objective, to recommend strategies for improving the effective use of social media in marketing library services, relates to the DOI concept of reinvention, where strategies are tailored to enhance compatibility, ease of use, and the sustainability of the innovation within the library's context.

2.1. Social Media Platforms

Academic libraries have increasingly turned to social media platforms to enhance visibility and engage users. Widely used platforms include Facebook, YouTube, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, Flickr, blogs, and wikis [19]-[21]. Each platform offers unique features that support specific marketing goals: Facebook for announcements and community building, YouTube for tutorials and instructional videos, X for real-time updates and campaigns, Instagram for visually engaging content aimed at younger audiences, and LinkedIn for professional development and networking [22] [23]. Though less common, Flickr and wikis provide opportunities for event promotion and collaborative knowledge-sharing. Collectively, these tools expand the avenues through which libraries can market their services and reach diverse user groups.

2.2. Level of Awareness and Usage

Despite the availability of social media platforms, awareness and active engage-

ment among library patrons remain inconsistent. Studies in Ghana and Pakistan reveal that while platforms like Facebook and instant messaging are popular, their use in library contexts is often limited due to low awareness [24] [25]. Similarly, findings from South Africa show that users interact with WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram primarily for personal purposes, while libraries employ Facebook and blogs more formally for service promotion [26]. [27] further observed that although students are aware of available resources, their actual use of library services is often limited to essential needs. Overall, awareness of social media exists, but effective utilisation for academic purposes remains low.

2.3. Challenges in the Adoption of Social Media Platforms

A consistent theme across the literature is the wide range of challenges that hinder effective adoption of social media in academic libraries. These include poor internet connectivity, lack of ICT infrastructure, limited funding, inadequate staff training, absence of marketing policies, and privacy or security concerns [19] [28] [29]. Studies further point to content obsolescence, insufficient technical support, unreliable power supply, limited devices, delayed feedback mechanisms, and weak government support [6] [16] [30]. In some cases, ignorance among librarians and lack of user awareness exacerbates these issues [31] [32]. Taken together, these findings suggest that both structural (infrastructure, funding) and human (skills, awareness, policy) factors limit the effectiveness of social media marketing in libraries.

2.4. Strategies for Effective Use of Social Media in Marketing Library Services

Scholars recommend a variety of strategies to overcome these challenges. These include providing adequate funding, improving internet connectivity, developing clear policies for social media use, and creating dedicated marketing departments or teams within libraries [30]. Professional development initiatives, such as workshops, training courses, and inclusion of social media marketing in library and information science curricula, are also emphasised [33] [34]. Moreover, libraries are encouraged to institutionalise the use of social media tools, procure modern ICT equipment, engage experts to manage platforms, and incorporate user feedback into service improvement. The overall consensus is that success depends on adequate resources, staff training, supportive policies, and proactive engagement with users.

2.5. Literature Gap

Although studies from diverse contexts such as Ghana, South Africa, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka demonstrate the potential of social media in marketing library servic es [19] [24] [28], limited research exists in the Ugandan context. The few studies available [16] [17] have explored social media primarily about resource promotion or enhancement of library services. None has specifically examined the actual tools used to market library services within Ugandan academic libraries. This creates a clear gap, which the present study seeks to address by investigating

the adoption and use of social media platforms in Lira University Library.

3. Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach using a convergent parallel design. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously, analysed separately, and then compared to identify points of convergence or divergence in the findings [35]. The quantitative component utilised structured, closed-ended questionnaires administered to final-year students, while the qualitative component involved face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions directed at library staff. This design offered both breadth and depth in exploring the use of social media for marketing library services.

The study population comprised 450 final-year students, selected due to their extensive exposure to library services, and six library staff members, bringing the total population to 456. The sample size of 230 students was determined using [36] simplified formula for sample size calculation, $n = N/(1 + N(e^2))$, where $N = 450$ and $e = 0.05$, yielding $n \approx 212$. The chosen sample of 230, therefore, exceeds the minimum requirement, ensuring adequate statistical power and representativeness, while purposive sampling was employed to select the six staff members based on their expertise and roles within the library. The primary data collection tools included a structured questionnaire for the quantitative part (students) and an interview guide for the qualitative part (library staff). Quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), while qualitative data were transcribed and systematically coded through an iterative process of open, axial, and selective coding to identify emerging patterns and themes. To enhance trustworthiness, themes were cross-checked and refined through peer debriefing and intercoder agreement checks until consensus was reached.

Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before involvement in both the quantitative and qualitative components of the study. Measures were taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, including the use of participant codes in place of names and secure storage of all data. Only the research team had access to the information, and findings are reported in aggregate to minimise the risk of identification.

4. Findings of the Study

4.1. Demographic Information

Figure 1 revealed the gender of the respondents where 101 (55%) were male and 83 (45%) were female meaning majority of the respondents were male compared to female.

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of respondents by academic level, showing that the majority were undergraduate students (n = 162), followed by postgraduate students (n = 15) and master's students (n = 7). This indicates that undergraduate students constituted the largest proportion of the study participants.

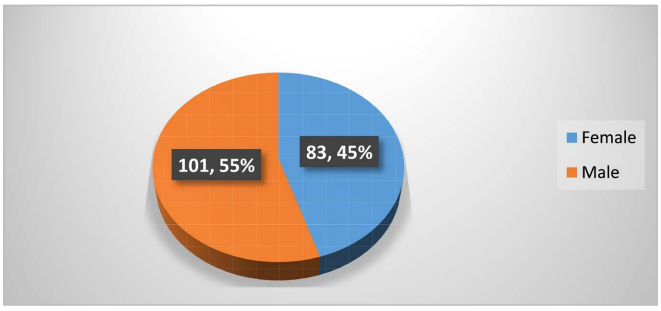

Figure 1. Gender of the respondents.

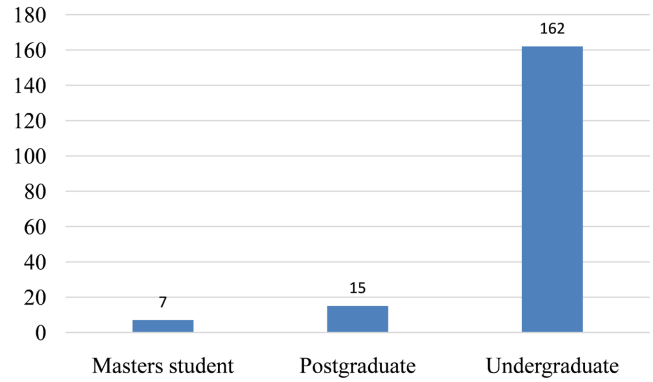

Figure 2. Respondent status at the university.

4.2. Current Use of Social Media Platforms

This section presents the social media tools, frequency of use and library services marketed through social media. This helps to determine the SM tools that are available in the library, their frequency of use, and the library services marketed through SM.

4.2.1. Social Media Platforms

In regard of the use of social media, the respondents were asked about the social media platforms used by Lira University Library where they were allowed to tick all SM they use, this was analysed as a multiple-choice response as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. Social media platforms.

		Responses		Percent of cases
		N	Percent	
$sm_tools[a]	Facebook	136	27.3%	74.7%
	YouTube	67	13.4%	36.8%
	WhatsApp	91	18.2%	50.0%
	X (Formerly twitter)	100	20.0%	54.9%
	LinkedIn	70	14.0%	38.5%
	Instagram	35	7.0%	19.2%
Total		**499**	**100.0%**	**274.2%**

4.2.2. Frequency Use of Social Media

Here, the respondents were tasked with establishing the times or frequency at which the library shares content on social media platforms, as indicated in Figure 3.

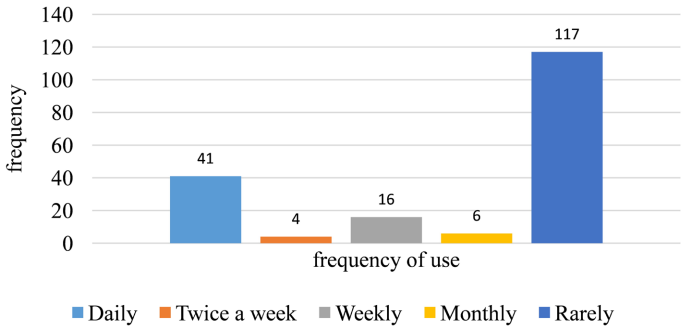

Figure 3. Frequency of SM use.

4.2.3. Library Services Marketed through Social Media Platforms

The study also sought to establish the library services that are most frequently marketed through social media platforms to understand the type of library services marketed through SM. This was analysed as a multiple-choice response as represented in Table 2.

Table 2. Library services marketed by SM tools.

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Library services	Current awareness services	131	20.7%	71.6%
	Library workshop and training	96	15.1%	52.5%
	New arrivals of books	101	15.9%	55.2%
	Selective Dissemination of information	75	11.8%	41.0%
	Library working hours	89	14.0%	48.6%
	Research tools and databases	72	11.4%	39.3%
	Library events like exhibitions	70	11.0%	38.3%
	Total	**634**	**100.0%**	**346.4%**

4.3. The Level of Awareness and Usage of Social Media among Students

This section addresses the second objective of the study, which was to examine students' awareness of social media, the extent of their engagement, the influence of social media on their usage of library services, and the specific services they frequently learn about through these platforms.

4.3.1. Awareness of Social Media by Students

The findings indicate that the majority of students are aware that the library uses social media to market its services. This was reflected by 135 respondents (73.4%)

who answered Yes, while 49 respondents (26.6%) indicated No. These results are consistent with findings from similar studies [1] [27] [37], which also reported high levels of awareness among students regarding library social media presence.

4.3.2. Users' Engagement with Library's Social Media Posts

This subsection explores how frequently students engage with the library's social media posts. The findings revealed varying levels of engagement: 71.2% of respondents indicated they rarely engage, 20.7% reported daily engagement, 4.9% weekly, and only 1.6% engaged twice a week or monthly. These results suggest that although awareness is high, the actual level of interaction with the library's social media content remains relatively low.

4.3.3. Social Media Influence on Users' Awareness and Usage

This area examined whether SM influences the user awareness and usage and the findings revealed Yes with a percentage of 75% and No represented 25%. This means that the presence of social media in the library influences the respondents to be aware and use the library services.

4.3.4. Library Services Users Mostly Learn through Social Media

This subsection assessed the library services that the respondents mostly learn through social media and the respondents were allowed to tick all the library services they mostly learn, this was analysed as multiple-choice responses as represented in Table 3.

Table 3. Library services.

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$library_services_users[a]	New book arrivals	117	20.7%	63.9%
	Current awareness services	110	19.4%	60.1%
	Library trainings and workshops	90	15.9%	49.2%
	Upcoming library events	85	15.0%	46.4%
	Research databases	85	15.0%	46.4%
	Reference tools	79	14.0%	43.2%
	Total	**566**	**100.0%**	**309.3%**

4.4. Challenges Hindering Adoption of Social Media

The third objective addressed institutional barriers, that refrain the library from adopting social media for marketing their services and this was also analysed as a multiple-choice response as described in Table 4.

Skills or trainings by library staff and social media policies in place.

This area was assessed to know whether the library staff had adequate skills or training in the usage of social media to market library services and the findings showed that, the responses were Yes and it was represented by 107 (58.2%)

and No with 77 (41.8%). On whether there are SM policies on the usage of SM, the study findings revealed Yes represented by 77.2% and No represented by 22.8%.

Table 4. Technical/institutional barriers.

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$technical_issues[a]	Lack of library policies on social usage	128	21.5%	69.9%
	Inadequate social media skills by librarians	102	17.2%	55.7%
	Poor internet connections	114	19.2%	62.3%
	Technological changes	68	11.4%	37.2%
	Data privacy	69	11.6%	37.7%
	Budget restraints	113	19.0%	61.7%
	Total	**594**	**100.0%**	**324.6%**

General challenges that hinder adaptation of SM in marketing library services.

The subsection was put into consideration to identify challenges that hinder adopting social media for marketing library services, it was analysed as a multiple-choice response as represented in Table 5.

Table 5. General challenges hindering adoption of SM in marketing library services.

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$challenges[a]	Insufficient training in social media engagement	147	22.5%	79.9%
	Technological changes	99	15.2%	53.8%
	Limited numbers of staff	81	12.4%	44.0%
	Budget restraints	80	12.3%	43.5%
	Poor internet connection	91	13.9%	49.5%
	Unstable power	61	9.3%	33.2%
	Limited infrastructures	94	14.4%	51.1%
	Total	**653**	**100.0%**	**354.9%**

4.5. Propose Strategies for Effective Use of SM in Marketing Library Services

The question under this objective was also a multiple-choice response that required the respondents to suggest possible measures that can be taken into consideration to enhance the effective use of social media for marketing library services, they are proposed as in Table 6.

Table 6. Best practices that can be adopted for effective use of SM for marketing.

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$best_practices[a]	Train staff on the use of social media tools	163	31.0%	88.6%
	Develop social media policy on usage of the tools	106	20.2%	57.6%
	Identify your audience and the type of content that is useful to them	93	17.7%	50.5%
	Choose right platforms for content creation	84	16.0%	45.7%
	Encourage interactions with users by posing questions to them	80	15.2%	43.5%
	Total	**526**	**100.0%**	**285.9%**

Content type users prefer or expect from the Library's SM platforms

This subsection was analysed as a multiple-choice response where respondents were to propose the content they prefer from library SM platforms, they are suggested as in Table 7.

Table 7. Content type users prefer or expect from the library's SM.

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$content_type[a]	User-generated content	97	17.0%	52.7%
	Interactive posts	96	16.9%	52.2%
	Research tips	111	19.5%	60.3%
	Library news and updates	112	19.7%	60.9%
	Library event promotions	74	13.0%	40.2%
	Use of different databases	79	13.9%	42.9%
	Total	**569**	**100.0%**	**309.2%**

Measuring the success of the library SM marketing efforts

The respondents were given many options to choose from and this was analysed as a multiple-choice response. The responses are reflected in Table 8.

Table 8. Measuring the success of the library social media marketing efforts.

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$measure_sucess[a]	Likes/reactions on the media tools	146	23.8%	79.3%
	Comments on the Post	96	15.7%	52.2%
	Shares/retweets	78	12.7%	42.4%

Continued

$measure_sucess[a]	Bookmarks/saves of the post	76	12.4%	41.3%
	Mention of the post to different groups	61	10.0%	33.2%
	Use of surveys for customer satisfaction	68	11.1%	37.0%
	Downloads of the post	88	14.4%	47.8%
	Total	**613**	**100.0%**	**333.2%**

Partnerships or collaborations that could support SM engagement

This last sub-section on the objectives of strategies was also analysed as a multiple-choice response to suggest the partnerships/collaborations that could support SM engagement. It is represented in Table 9.

Table 10 displays the results of the Chi-square Test of Independence, with a Pearson Chi-square value of 7.209, 3 degrees of freedom, and a p-value of 0.066. This suggests that the association between the variables is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. One cell (12.5%) had an expected count below 5, with the lowest expected count being 3.46.

Table 9. Partnerships or collaborations that could support SM engagement.

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$partnerships[a]	Other nearby libraries with similar audience	115	17.9%	62.5%
	Local communities like schools, colleges, NGOs	144	22.4%	78.3%
	Local businesses for example cafes, bookstores	82	12.8%	44.6%
	Social media influencers	114	17.8%	62.0%
	Library patrons	89	13.9%	48.4%
	Local governments for support	98	15.3%	53.3%
	Total	**642**	**100.0%**	**348.9%**

Table 10. Chi-square test of independence.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.209[a]	3	.066
Likelihood Ratio	6.830	3	.078
Linear-by-Linear Association	.204	1	.651
N of Valid Cases	184		

a. 1 cells (12.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.46.

5. Discussions and Conclusion

5.1. Demographic Information

This section presents the demographic characteristics of respondents, including gender, academic status, and faculty affiliation. Understanding these demographics is critical in analysing how different groups engage with social media in accessing library services.

5.2. Gender of Respondents

The study examined the gender distribution of respondents to establish participation patterns in the use of social media for accessing information about library services at Lira University Library. As illustrated in **Figure 1**, the results provide insights into how male and female respondents engage with the library's social media platforms. Examining gender is particularly important because demographic factors such as gender often influence technology adoption and information-seeking behaviour, which in turn affect the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool in academic libraries.

5.3. Academic Status of Respondents

The findings in **Figure 2** show that undergraduate students formed the largest group of respondents, with 162 (88%), followed by postgraduate diploma students with 15 (8.2%), and master's students with 7 (3.8%). This distribution reflects the enrolment patterns reported in the 2024/2025 Annual Report of the Academic Registrar Lira University [38], which indicates that undergraduate students significantly outnumber postgraduate students.

5.4. Social Media Platforms

The multiple-choice analysis in **Table 1** revealed that respondents were generally aware of the social media platforms used by the library. Among these, Facebook emerged as the most recognized and widely used, with 136 responses (27.3%). It was followed by X (formerly Twitter) with 100 (20%), WhatsApp with 91 (18.2%), LinkedIn with 70 (14%), YouTube with 67 (13.4%), and Instagram with the lowest recognition at 35 (7%). These results suggest that Facebook remains the dominant platform for library engagement, a trend consistent with earlier studies [24] [26] [39] [40].

5.5. Frequency Use of Social Media

As shown in **Figure 3**, the findings indicate that the library rarely posts or shares content on its platforms, with 117 respondents (63.6%) reporting "rarely." This was followed by daily (41; 22.3%), weekly (16; 8.7%), monthly (6; 3.3%), and twice a week (4; 2.2%). These findings suggest underutilization of available platforms and corroborate [41] study, which similarly revealed that librarians often make limited use of social media to promote information resources.

5.6. Library Services Promoted via Social Media

The analysis in Table 2 revealed that current awareness services (CAS), such as email alerts, were the most frequently promoted services (20.7%), followed by new book arrivals (15.9%), library workshops and training (15.1%), library working hours (14%), selective dissemination of information (SDI) (11.8%), research tools and databases (11.4%), and library events such as exhibitions (11%). These findings indicate that CAS dominates library marketing, consistent with previous research that ranked it among the most widely marketed services.

Interviews with library staff reinforced these findings. Staff emphasized that they mainly promote CAS, book arrivals, operational hours, and library activities:

- "We mainly provide current awareness services" (Staff 3, Interview, June 19, 2025).
- "We upload pictures of collections, new books, operational hours, and respond to user queries" (Staff 1, Interview, June 19, 2025).
- "We post library activities, new book arrivals, trainings, operational hours, circulation, and reference services" (Staff 2, Interview, June 19, 2025).

5.7. Library Services Users Mostly Learn through Social Media

As shown in Table 3, respondents indicated that new book arrivals (20.7%) and CAS (19.4%) were the most frequently learned services via social media, followed by library trainings and workshops (15.9%), upcoming events and research databases (15% each), and reference tools (14%). These findings are consistent with [33] [42], who also identified newly acquired materials, CAS, SDI, and library outreach as core services promoted by academic libraries.

5.8. Challenges Hindering Adoption of Social Media

The multiple-choice analysis in Table 4 revealed key barriers to effective use of social media in marketing library services. Lack of library policies on social media (21.5%) emerged as the most significant challenge, followed by poor internet connectivity (19.2%), budget constraints (19%), inadequate skills among librarians (17.2%), data privacy concerns (11.6%), and rapid technological changes (11.4%). These findings are consistent with earlier studies [42] [43].

Library staff interviews provided further validation:

- "Lack of clear policies, inadequate resources, information overload, and negative staff attitudes" (Staff 1, Interview, June 19, 2025).
- "Internet fluctuations, lack of design skills, limited visibility of content, and inadequate funding" (Staff 2, Interview, June 19, 2025).
- "Absence of policies, lack of tools, limited knowledge in content creation, and inadequate funding" (Staff 3, Interview, June 19, 2025).

5.9. General Challenges That Hinder Adaptation of SM in Marketing Library Services

As shown in Table 5, insufficient training in social media engagement was the

most reported challenge (147; 22.5%), followed by rapid technological changes (99; 15.2%), limited infrastructure (94; 14.4%), poor internet (91; 13.9%), limited staffing (81; 12.4%), budget constraints (80; 12.3%), and unstable power (61; 9.3%). These results align with findings by [29] [31] [32], who similarly highlighted infrastructure, funding, and skills as major challenges.

5.10. Best Practices and Strategies

The multiple-choice responses in Table 6 suggest several strategies for improving social media use. Training staff ranked highest (31%), followed by developing social media policies (20.2%), tailoring content to audience needs (17.7%), selecting appropriate platforms (16%), and encouraging interaction through engaging content (15.2%). These strategies are consistent with previous research [29] [31] [32].

Staff interviews supported these recommendations:

- "Set clear policies, provide regular training, and advocate for financial and institutional support" (Staff 1, Interview, June 19, 2025).
- "Provide training, secure more funds, and sensitize students about library services" (Staff 2, Interview, June 19, 2025).
- "Train staff in marketing, provide equipment, and ensure stable internet" (Staff 3, Interview, June 19, 2025).

5.11. Types of Content Shared

As indicated in Table 7, the most popular type of content shared was library news and updates (112; 19.7%), followed by research tips (111; 19.5%), user-generated content (97; 17%), interactive posts (96; 16.9%), database use (79; 13.9%), and event promotions (74; 13%).

5.12. Measuring Engagement

The analysis in Table 8 shows that likes and reactions were the most common engagement indicators (23.8%), followed by comments (15.7%), downloads (14.4%), shares/retweets (12.7%), bookmarks/saves (12.4%), surveys (11.1%), and mentions (10%). These measures mirror those identified by [23], who emphasized the importance of likes, comments, shares, and follower growth in assessing social media success.

5.13. Partnerships and Collaborations

Table 9 highlights potential collaborations to strengthen social media engagement. Local communities such as schools, colleges, and NGOs ranked highest (22.4%), followed by nearby libraries with similar audiences (17.9%), social media influencers (17.8%), local governments (15.3%), library patrons (13.9%), and local businesses (12.8%). These findings suggest that partnerships with educational and library networks are perceived as the most effective way of boosting visibility and relevance.

Finally, Table 10 shows the test whether awareness, engagement, and demographic variables were significantly related; a Chi-square test was performed. The analysis revealed no statistically significant association between awareness and [demographic variable], χ^2 (3, N = 184) = 7.21, p = 0.066. These results indicate that awareness levels were not dependent on this demographic factor in the sample.

6. Conclusion

The integration of social media into the marketing strategies of academic libraries has become increasingly essential in the 21st century. In an ever-evolving digital landscape, social media platforms present unique opportunities for engagement, outreach, and the promotion of library services. Libraries that have embraced these tools find it easier to communicate with users, facilitate real-time interactions, and disseminate information in accessible and engaging ways. Platforms such as Facebook are widely used to market library products and services, particularly to distance learners, thereby extending outreach. LinkedIn connects users with professionals and subject specialists, fostering networking and professional development. X (formerly Twitter) enables the sharing of timely updates and announcements about library activities, while YouTube allows researchers to upload and share videos, providing global access to knowledge in a convenient, user-friendly format. Other platforms also contribute by enhancing the visibility and accessibility of library services. In conclusion, while the use of social media in marketing library services offers considerable opportunities, it also brings notable challenges. Academic libraries must navigate the complexities of implementation and manage user expectations effectively to remain relevant and responsive in an era of digital information overload.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study made the following recommendations and proposed best practices for effectively marketing library services through social media tools.

7.1. Provide Regular Training

The library should offer continuous professional development for staff to build essential digital competencies, including content creation, platform management, and effective user engagement. Such training will enhance both the creativity and the effectiveness of social media marketing initiatives.

7.2. Institutionalise Social Media Tools

Social media accounts should be formally established and recognised within the university's communication framework. This will make it easier for users to locate, follow, and engage with the library's platforms. Awareness can be strengthened through orientations, promotional materials, and digital literacy workshops,

thereby improving outreach particularly to remote users.

7.2.1. Ensure Adequate Funding

The university should allocate sufficient resources to enable libraries to invest in the necessary infrastructure, such as modern ICT tools, staff training, and financial support for digital initiatives. This investment will sustain the library's relevance, visibility, and capacity for innovation.

7.2.2. Develop Clear Institutional Social Media Policies

The library should formulate comprehensive social media policies that outline objectives, appropriate content types, posting schedules, branding guidelines, and procedures for handling user interactions. Such policies will ensure consistency, professionalism, and alignment with institutional goals.

7.2.3. Maintain Existing Social Media Accounts

Existing social media handles should be actively maintained and managed by skilled personnel, including staff with expertise in graphic design. Well-managed accounts will remain attractive, engaging, and visually appealing to users.

7.2.4. Foster Strategic Collaborations

The libraries should partner with faculties, academic departments, student associations, local schools, and social media influencers to co-create content and promote events. Tagging and cross-posting library activities on partner accounts will expand outreach and visibility.

8. Limitations

This study is subject to several limitations. First, reliance on self-reported data may have introduced response bias. Second, the qualitative component was limited to six staff interviews, which may not fully capture diverse perspectives. Finally, the focus on a single institution restricts the generalizability of the findings to broader contexts.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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