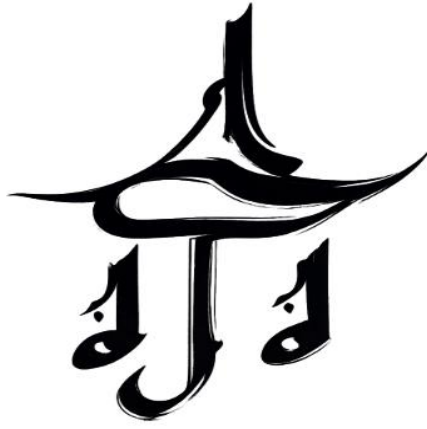




AKADEMİK TARİH VE DÜŞÜNCE DERGİSİ

Academic Journal of History and Idea

Research Article

Received: 30.12.2025

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Accepted: 28.02.2026

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The Role of Advertising in Library Management

Kütüphane Yönetiminde Reklamın Rolü

Abstract

This study examines the importance of advertising and marketing activities in enabling libraries to reach wider audiences and enhance user engagement within the contemporary information society. Advertising serves as a key instrument for promoting library services, information resources, and institutional initiatives. Within the framework of modern library management, advertising strategies contribute to improving user awareness, strengthening institutional visibility, and supporting the development of reading culture. The integration of digital technologies has increased the effectiveness and flexibility of advertising practices in libraries. In particular, social media platforms, institutional websites, and electronic communication channels have significantly expanded the reach of library advertising activities.

Keywords: library management, advertising, library marketing, information services, user engagement

Öz

Bu çalışma, kütüphanelerin daha geniş kitlelere ulaşmasını ve kullanıcı etkileşiminin artırılmasını sağlayan reklam ve pazarlama faaliyetlerinin önemini incelemektedir. Reklam, kütüphane hizmetlerinin, bilgi kaynaklarının ve kurumsal girişimlerin tanıtılmasında temel bir araç olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Modern kütüphane yönetimi çerçevesinde reklam stratejileri; kullanıcı farkındalığının artırılmasına, kurumsal görünürlüğün güçlendirilmesine ve okuma kültürünün geliştirilmesine katkı sağlamaktadır. Dijital teknolojilerin entegrasyonu, kütüphanelerde reklam uygulamalarının etkinliğini ve esnekliğini artırmıştır. Özellikle sosyal medya platformları, kurumsal web siteleri ve elektronik iletişim kanalları, kütüphane reklam faaliyetlerinin erişim alanını önemli ölçüde genişletmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: kütüphane yönetimi, reklam, kütüphane pazarlaması, bilgi hizmetleri, kullanıcı etkileşimi

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Citation: Mammadov, M., & Mahammadli, D. (2026). The Role of Advertising in Library Management. *Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi*, 13(3), 1-11.

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Introduction

Advertising is among the key factors shaping market formation. It functions not only as a means of information dissemination but also as an instrument for strengthening institutional image. Institutional image is constructed through advertising and communication processes within mass perception. In this context, both directly relevant and indirectly associated characteristics of an object may be mobilized for advertising purposes. Today, advertising is widely regarded as an artistic form, a socio-cultural phenomenon, and an integral component of culture.

As an essential element of management, advertising performs multiple functions and employs diverse tools. Within library management, advertising refers to the dissemination of information about products, services, and activities to the public through mass communication channels, conducted by physical and legal entities on a paid basis and without the direct participation of the target audience.

Advertising is also a field of information services aimed at generating or maintaining interest in individuals, institutions, ideas, and innovations, as well as facilitating the implementation and promotion of goods, concepts, and new developments. This framework establishes the functional basis of advertising activity and enables its systematic development. The objectives of advertising are determined in accordance with the strategic goals of the institution.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative methodology based on a systematic literature review to examine the role of advertising in library management within contemporary information systems. A structured document analysis approach is employed, using peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and academic monographs in library science, information management, and communication studies. The selected literature is chosen based on relevance, academic credibility, and thematic alignment with library advertising and management functions. No primary data were collected. The study relies exclusively on secondary sources, which are systematically reviewed and synthesized to develop a conceptual framework of library advertising practices. The literature is organized into key analytical categories, including advertising strategies in libraries, communication channels, user engagement mechanisms, and digital transformation in library services. Narrative synthesis is applied to integrate findings and identify conceptual patterns related to advertising as a managerial tool in libraries.

Library advertising: functions, theoretical framework and institutional dimensions

Library advertising has gained increasing importance within contemporary information environments. Its role extends beyond simple dissemination of information about library services and includes strategic functions such as expanding user bases, strengthening institutional visibility, and improving engagement with both current and potential users. Accordingly, library advertising should not be limited to existing readership but must also target potential users. This requirement leads to the institutional need for dedicated marketing and advertising units in libraries and increases demand for qualified professionals in management and marketing roles (Aliyeva et al., 2025a).

In the modern information era, advertising is characterized by multifunctionality, with its dominant dimension being the social function. Within cultural and library contexts, this function is particularly significant, as advertising contributes to the integration of society and the formation of collective structures (Muhammedli, 2025; Mammadov & Rzayeva, 2020). It also plays a role in shaping societal needs and organizing both material and symbolic dimensions of social life.

Advertising can be conceptualized as a mechanism that contributes to harmonizing individual motivations with collective orientations. Through symbolic systems and shared cultural references, it facilitates social cohesion and collective meaning-making processes. In this context, library advertising differs fundamentally from commercial advertising, as it is grounded in a public-service logic in which information is not treated as a commodity but as a socially responsible resource. This distinction highlights its educational function, particularly in shaping user behavior and supporting informational literacy.

Library advertising also intersects with broader social domains such as environmental protection, public health, and social welfare policies. These intersections demonstrate its role as a form of public communication embedded within wider societal structures. Empirical observations suggest that social advertising practices are widely implemented in various regions, although their development levels differ significantly across contexts (Bayramova et al., 2026; Kazimi & Gurbanov, 2022).

Additionally, advertising performs an ideological function, as it reflects underlying value systems and institutional priorities. It contributes to the articulation and dissemination of normative frameworks within society (Oqlu et al., 2023; Akbar, 2018). Alongside this, its economic function remains essential for the development and sustainability of library services through demand stimulation and resource expansion (Mammadov, 2015; Tofiq et al., 2022).

Library advertising is structured as a systematic managerial process composed of interrelated components, including objective definition, target audience identification, budgeting, content development, message design, media selection, and evaluation. This structured approach reflects its integration into broader institutional management systems (Mammadov et al., 2024; Bayramov et al., 2026). Within this framework, advertising objectives typically include increasing user engagement, enhancing institutional reputation, and strengthening the visibility of library services in society (Parviz F. O. Kazimi et al., 2025).

Advertising text creation involves the use of structured and purposeful communication strategies designed to enhance the effectiveness of message delivery. In this context, it is essential to identify the emotional and cognitive benefits that users derive from library services. Such benefits may include access to new knowledge resources, participation in cultural events, and engagement with intellectual activities that expand informational horizons (Abasova & Mahammadli, 2025).

By aligning rational, emotional, and social dimensions of user experience, advertising professionals can achieve more effective communication outcomes. This approach allows advertising messages to operate not only at the informational level but also at the perceptual and behavioral levels, thereby increasing their impact on user engagement.

The selection of advertising media depends on multiple interrelated factors, including institutional reputation, message frequency, communication consistency, impact intensity, cost, and duration of exposure. In practice, advertising campaigns may utilize a combination of channels such as television, radio, print media, direct communication tools, and outdoor advertising formats. These categories are not strictly separated, as they often overlap in practical applications (Mammadov & Mahammadli, 2025).

Television advertising, although relatively costly and complex, is considered one of the most influential forms due to its combined audio-visual structure and wide audience reach. However, for libraries, this form of advertising is often limited to documentary presentations, reports, or informational segments that highlight institutional activities (Aliyeva et al., 2025b). Visual branding elements such as logos and institutional symbols may also be integrated into broadcast content during cultural or educational events.

Print advertising remains one of the most widely used methods in library communication. It includes materials published in newspapers, journals, bulletins, catalogs, and specialized supplements. Libraries frequently utilize print media to announce events and disseminate information about services and programs (Muhammedli, 2025; Abasova & Mahammadli, 2025). Local print outlets are

particularly effective due to their accessibility and timely dissemination, while magazines provide longer-term visibility due to their extended circulation life.

Brochures represent another important form of printed advertising. They are often used to present libraries as cultural institutions, highlighting their services, collections, and social roles (Kazimi & Gurbanov, 2022). In addition to textual content, brochures frequently include visual materials such as photographs and illustrations to enhance communicative impact.

Libraries also make use of leaflets, posters, and similar visual communication tools, which are distributed in public spaces such as exhibitions, fairs, and cultural events. These materials serve both informational and promotional purposes, contributing to institutional visibility and recognition. Press releases and small-format informational materials such as calendars, bookmarks, stickers, and labels also play a role in reinforcing institutional identity. These items function as supplementary communication tools that maintain continuous user engagement beyond direct service interaction.

Library advertising materials may also be integrated into bibliographic and methodological publications, including guides, catalogs, and reference works. In such cases, advertising becomes embedded within informational content, creating a hybrid form of communication that combines educational and promotional functions.

Outdoor advertising is considered one of the most visible forms of communication due to its public accessibility and repetitive exposure. It plays a role in information dissemination, brand reinforcement, and memory activation (2021& Habib, 2022; Kazimi & Mammadov, 2020). Despite its advantages, outdoor advertising also faces limitations such as the lack of precise targeting and difficulty in measuring immediate user response. These constraints necessitate the creation of concise and impactful messages that can attract attention within a very limited time frame.

Outdoor advertising may include billboards, transport-based advertising, architectural signage, and directional systems. Within library contexts, signage is particularly important for guiding users and ensuring accessibility. Clear and simple directional messages improve user experience and enhance institutional visibility.

Audio-based advertising, particularly radio communication, offers continuous exposure and emotional engagement through voice and sound design (Mammadov, 2014; Mammadov & Rzayeva, 2020). Sound elements such as ambient noise or symbolic audio cues can strengthen memorability and increase user interest.

Direct marketing represents a more targeted form of communication, delivering messages directly to specific user groups (Ismayilov, Mahammadli & Khudiyeva, 2022). This method includes

brochures, invitations, catalogs, and other printed or digital materials distributed directly to individuals or institutions. Its effectiveness lies in precision targeting and personalized communication.

Advertising text creation involves the use of various individual methods. In this context, it is crucial to understand what “reward” users receive when utilizing advertised services and how this is experienced in emotional terms. For example, participants attending a literary evening may discover a new book, obtain interesting information, and meet a favorite artist. By aligning different types of rewards (rational, emotional, and social satisfaction) with corresponding experiential forms, creative professionals in advertising can achieve more effective outcomes. The prominent advertising specialist Rosser Reeves formulated this principle as follows: advertising is the art of embedding a unique selling proposition into the minds of a small number of people with minimal expenditure. This statement clearly outlines the key challenges facing advertising professionals.

The selection of advertising media is determined by several factors, including the reputation of the organization, the frequency and consistency of the message, the impact strength of the advertising format, cost, and duration of presentation. In organizing advertising activities, the selection of media is of such importance that, in practice, advertising campaigns can be built on the following main channels: television advertising, radio advertising, direct marketing, outdoor advertising, and others. The classification of these tools is relatively conditional and does not have strict boundaries (Mammadov & Mahammadli, 2025).

Television advertising, despite being expensive and complex, is considered the most prestigious and effective form of advertising. Its main advantage lies in the combination of audio and visual impact and its ability to reach a very broad audience. However, for libraries, this form of advertising is often realized through documentary or report-based formats presenting library activities (Aliyeva et al., 2025b).

Print advertising is produced through polygraphic methods. It includes materials published in newspapers, magazines, bulletins, catalogs, and advertising supplements. Libraries frequently utilize print media to announce events and disseminate information about services and programs (Muhammedli, 2025; Abasova & Mahammadli, 2025).

Many libraries produce brochures—special publications dedicated to the library itself, specific areas of its activity, or major events, as well as presenting the library as a cultural center of its region (Kazimi et al., 2026; Kazimi & Gurbanov, 2022). In addition to textual content, brochures include high-quality color photographs and illustrations.

When developing advertising copy, at least three principles must be considered: to whom, what, and how the message is delivered. The question “to whom?” requires identifying the target users who may benefit from the library’s services. “What?” refers to the key advantages offered by the library. “How?” relates to the artistic form, originality, and persuasive power of the advertising message. Effective advertising communication depends on the balanced combination of these elements and their adaptation to the characteristics of the intended audience (Abasova & Mahammadli, 2025). The main structural elements of an advertising message include a headline, slogan, information block, motivational expression, and contact details.

A slogan is a brief, figurative expression that constitutes the core of an advertising message. According to specialists, approximately 75% of advertising effectiveness depends on the slogan itself. If the slogan fails to attract attention, the text is not read. The library slogan forms part of its institutional image and is not frequently changed (Mahammadli, 2022). It expresses the philosophy of the library and highlights the advantages of its activities.

There is considerable practical experience in the development of slogans. They are usually based on emotionally powerful keywords and concise formulations capable of attracting attention and remaining memorable over time.

The information block must be precise and concise. It explains and expands the slogan, clarifying its meaning. It also indicates which problem the service solves. The information block should be both informative and engaging, presenting the library’s activities, advantages, and opportunities available to users. It includes the library’s name, address, telephone numbers, website, event schedules, conditions, and related information (Abasova & Mahammadli, 2025). The echo phrase (or “echo message”) is a short expression that completes the main idea of the slogan and summarizes the content of the advertising text.

Timing and effectiveness of advertising. The selection of the time for advertising dissemination plays an important role in library activities. Proper timing depends on two factors: the duration of the advertising campaign and the most effective time for its presentation. Advertising may be delivered intensively over a short period or intermittently over a longer period (Mammadov & Mahammadli, 2025). Libraries often use advertising at specific intervals to strengthen their image and create a positive memory effect. Such advertising supports the overall activity of the library. Advertising campaigns related to major events, including festivals, competitions, and exhibitions, generally require greater intensity and continuity.

The evaluation of advertising effectiveness is the final stage in the organization of advertising activities. For libraries, direct financial indicators, as in commercial advertising, are not always applicable. The simplest measurement method is the increase in the number of readers and users after advertising. Therefore, the concept of communicative effectiveness emerges, allowing the assessment of advertising results from the perspective of audience response and institutional visibility.

The most widely used methods include surveys, interviews, and observation. Questionnaires are distributed among individuals who receive library cards or within local communities. The effectiveness of advertising messages is evaluated both before and after the placement of advertising materials. As a result of measuring advertising impact, the emotional response it generates can be determined as positive, negative, or neutral.

The effectiveness of funds spent on advertising activities can be considered from three perspectives. The effectiveness of advertising activities may be equal to the costs incurred; it may exceed the costs incurred, resulting in a profitable outcome; or it may remain below the costs incurred, resulting in a loss-making outcome (Rzayeva & Mahammadli, 2025). In order to determine the economic efficiency of paid advertising services, the profitability of advertising must be calculated. Information support of advertising is a subsystem of the library-information system. The requirements for advertising information support are universal in nature and include completeness of information, objectivity of information, and ease of use by users. Therefore, managers may rely on various information systems when making managerial decisions.

Conclusion

Advertising has acquired a significant place in contemporary society and has become an important component of institutional communication. Within the library sphere, advertising performs multiple functions and serves a variety of objectives. When determining the goals of advertising activities in libraries, particular attention is given to their effectiveness and their contribution to the achievement of institutional objectives. Depending on the specific goals established, appropriate advertising forms, methods, and communication tools are selected.

At present, advertising methods are widely applied in library management and constitute an integral element of managerial practice. Understanding the nature of advertising requires a clear definition of its aims, objectives, and functions within the library environment. This process involves the implementation of advertising tasks and the classification of advertising activities from a marketing perspective. In this regard, advertising in libraries possesses distinctive characteristics, as it

functions not only as a communication instrument but also as a key component of the marketing mix. At the same time, it contributes to strengthening institutional visibility, supporting user engagement, and promoting access to information resources. Consequently, advertising should be regarded as an essential element of contemporary library management and an integral component of cultural and informational development.

Author Contributions

Mehmanali Mammadov and Dashqin Mahammadli jointly contributed to the conception and design of the study. Both authors participated in the literature review process, data analysis, and interpretation of findings. The manuscript was collaboratively drafted and critically revised by both authors. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

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