

Full Length Research

Public relations tools in relation to effective public library services in South -West, Nigeria.

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This study looked into public relations tools in relation to public library services in Nigeria's South-West. There are two research questions. The study reviewed some related publications using major sub-headings of the study. The study's sample size is 144 form populations of professionals and paraprofessionals working in public libraries across the six states in the South-West. The study found a low, positive, and significant relationship between social media tools and effective library services in public libraries in South-West Nigeria; a moderate, positive, and significant relationship between electronic media tools and effective library services in Public Libraries in South-West Nigeria; high relationship between social media and electronic media in effective library services in Public Libraries in South-West Nigeria. The researchers made recommendation based on the study's findings.

KEYWORDS: Public Relations Tools, Relationship, Effective, Public Library Services, Social Media and Electronic media

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INTRODUCTION

Generally, Public libraries are those libraries that are built and maintained by particular state governments. Every public library serves a diverse spectrum of patrons regardless of their age, educational level, social class, political leanings, and so on. As a result, all socio-economic groups (including illiterates) visit public libraries, so the library has been dubbed the "Peoples University." A public library, according to Koontz and Gubbin (2010), provides access to knowledge, information, and fictional works through a variety of services available to all members of the community, regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, physical and mental limitations, economic and employment status, or educational attainment.

Nwokocha (2004) defines a public library as one that is established to serve the general public of the community or town in which it is located. It has the most diverse clientele when compared to other libraries because there are no restrictions on who can use it. Nwokocha (2004) further states that the Public Library "must be really accessible, with its doors open to all members of the community for free and equal usage, regardless of race, colour, nationality, age, sex, religion, status, or education." People can participate in learning activities, discuss and share knowledge and information in the public library. The major function of a public library in Nigeria is to provide information to users in the form of books, newspapers, magazines, journals, and audio-visual materials (Abubakar, 2017). They also serve as a source of entertainment and leisure. In developed countries, public libraries perform similar functions with the addition of postal services for citizens living in remote farm houses, as well as the establishment and provision of library and information

services to potential users such as prisoners, hospital patients, and the handicapped, but this is rarely the done in Nigeria. Inadequate funding, poor staff training and retraining, a high rate of illiteracy among citizens, outdated and irrelevant public library collections, and a lack of government recognition of the importance of libraries in the country's economic, social, educational, and national development are all issues that affect Public Library Services in Nigeria (Edom, 2012).

The essential condition for efficient public library services, according to the IFLA/UNESCO (2001) principles, is that they must be physically accessible to all members of the community. This necessitates, among other things, suitable information technology such as software and database or traditional information sources access. This contributes to the development of a variety of services for those who are unable to physically attend the library (Koontz & Gubbin, 2010). Public libraries, as well as the services they provide, are a long-term community investment that should be adequately funded. It was shown that even in the wealthiest civilizations, appropriate funding for all services is not always attainable. As a result, it's critical that services are established using planning and prioritizing. In all circumstances, regardless of the available financial sources for library services, such a process is unavoidable. Furthermore, the researchers believe that in order to develop a categorization of public library services that can be re-evaluated and adjusted as new services are delivered, strategic planning and meeting specified priorities are required.

Public Libraries in provide relevant, appropriate, and timely services such as bookmobiles, information and referral services, outreach programmes, current awareness programmes, children's library services, selective dissemination of information (SDI), and other services (Ebiwolate, 2010). For those users who, for whatever reason, cannot utilise the standard services and materials, such as linguistic minorities, individuals with impairments, or those in hospitals or prisons, special services and materials must be supplied.

According to the UNESCO Manifesto (2014) the following are the key services that should be at the core of Public Library Services, developing and strengthening reading habits in children from an early age; supporting both individual and self-directed education as well as formal education at all levels; providing opportunities for personal creative development, stimulating children's imagination and creativity; creating awareness of cultural heritage and appreciating cultural heritage

Public libraries, in order to provide effective services to their patrons, must engage in public relations. In this context, public relations mean that library staff should not sit and wait for patrons to come to them; instead, they should be able to reach out to users with essential information and thereby lure them to the library (Kwawal, 2015). It has been observed vthat communities do not completely utilise effective or maximum public library services since they are mostly unaware of the services supplied owing to a lack of publicity or public relations instruments to raise awareness. As a result, public relations techniques are critical for effectively providing public library services to the broader population.

Public relations is the art and science of managing public relations relationships. It aims to develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between a business or non-commercial organisation and its stakeholders or the general public (Al-Jenaibi, (2012) Library Professionals use public relations tools to provide excellent library services. Those public relations tools simply refer to the apparatuses, devices, or equipment used in the implementation of the library's public relations campaigns. They range in complexity from the simple to very complex electronic tools. Public relations tools in public library services are those apparatuses, gadgets, or equipment that are utilised in the process of conducting a library public relations programme or providing effective library services to users within or at a distance from the public library (Okon, Uwem & Simon, 2015).

Print media tools, non-print (audio-visual media tools), internet resources (social media tools), and electronic media tools are the four categories of public relations tools used to promote public library services (Okon, Uwem & Simon, 2015). Akanwa and Udo-Anyanwu (2017) further divided public relations tools or materials found in any sort of library into four categories: print media tools, non-print media tools, electronic media tools, and internet resources (social media) tools.

The researchers will concentrate on only two public relations instruments in this report. Electronic media and social media tools are the tools to be assessed. Social Media is also known by the terms "social network," "social software," "social computing," and "Web 2.0." It generally represents an electronic method of delivering unrestricted access to information to a large number of people separated by distance using the internet and other parts of the electronic information superhighway. InoReader, Feedly, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Myspace, Flickr, WeChat, RSS, Limo, Whastapp, and other social networking tools are examples. These tools are based on social interaction between groups of people in the community (Okereke & Oghenetega, 2014). Electronic media tools are the last but not least. Electronic media tools, according to Chuwueke, Nnadozie, Olowookere, and Josephe (2016), are platforms that allow end users to access material through electronic modern. Staff at Public Libraries could use these public relations tools to reach out to those who are unable to visit the library physically. For public relations professionals, these media are essential for the generation and transmission of information. They ensure that information is generated and used spontaneously by several groups of people at the same time.

Electronic media techniques make it easier to communicate information to a large group of people quickly and

effectively, regardless of their physical location. E-mail, teleconferencing, smartphones, smart televisions, laptops, websites, podcasts, and other electronic media tools are all useful for library public relations. Traditional materials are translated into electronic journals, books, zines, periodicals, and theses, which improve online and offline visibility and information consumption (Onwuka, 2016). Public library librarians can employ smart televisions, digital radio stations, podcasts, smart phones, and computers as public relations tools to provide successful library services to the public in various settings.

Unfortunately, in spite of the lofty ambitions and admirable aspirations stated above, public libraries continue to face a number of obstacles. Underfunding, lack of mobility, insufficient staff, poor awareness of public library services, insufficient current contents, and a lack of equipment are some of the obstacles. The poor circumstances of public libraries in the South-West States are similar to those of Public Libraries in other parts of Nigeria. Across the states in the South-West, library boards have diverse functional branch libraries. Despite the crucial roles played by public libraries in bridging the information and knowledge gap that have been recorded thus far, services provided by Public Libraries using public relations techniques are rarely available in Nigeria. In this context, these researchers hope to enhance awareness about the importance of public relations techniques in relation to public library services in Nigeria's South-West.

Statement of the Problem

Underfunding, lack of mobility, inadequate staff, insufficient current information resources, and limited knowledge of Public Library Services are among the problem confronting Nigerian Public Libraries. These researchers' preliminary observations revealed that Public Libraries in South-West Nigeria rarely provide adequate library services to its patrons. This condition has severely limited the ability of both urban and rural residents in the states to benefit from public library services for growth and development. The researchers seek to find out there is a link between the usage of public relations tools and the availability of library services in Public Libraries. What is the relationship between the employments of public relations tools in providing library services? The focus of this research is the solution to this question.

Purpose of the Study

Specifically, the study ascertained the:

1. Extent of relationship between electronic media tools and library services in Public Libraries in South-West, Nigeria; and the
2. Relationship between social media tools and library services in Public Libraries in South-West, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Public relations efforts help to create a concerted effort to express a positive picture of the library and promote the availability of the library's materials, programmes, and services. The importance of public relations operations in any library, especially public libraries, cannot be overstated (UNESCO, 2014). The idea of public relations tools being an important part of a well-run library is not new. The relevance of public relations was emphasised in professional journals of the area as early as 1958. Since the early 1970s, most public libraries have used at least some public relations methods to improve their interactions with a variety of stakeholders, including patrons, community members, and governing authorities (UNESCO, 2014).

Public library librarians should lead the way in encouraging residents to embrace technology in order to free up time for the most important activity: assisting users. Since the primary objective of public libraries is to provide equal access to knowledge to all citizens, why not be a digital trailblazer and incorporate cutting-edge technologies and services in public libraries? (Chinwendu, 2015). One of the digital sources the public relations specialists could employ to contact people online is electronic media technologies. For the end user (audience) to access the content, the Public Libraries public relations officers employ electronics or electromechanical energy. This differs from static media (mainly print media). Electronic media, on the other hand, can be in either analogue or digital electronic data format. Electronic mail, teleconferencing, television, radio, telephone/cell phones, desktop computers, gaming consoles, and handheld devices are examples of electronic instruments used in library public relations (Chinwendu, 2015).

To reach distance consumers in remote areas covered by of public libraries, public library relations specialists employ

email, television, radio, mobile phones, teleconferencing, and other methods. In the twenty-first century, electronic media tools are the most effective means of communicating and disseminating information. Below are two examples of electronic media tools as mentioned by the researchers:

Television with Intelligence: Smart television has a lot of potential as a PR medium since it combines printed texts, spoken words, moving pictures, colour, music, animation, and sound effects into one medium. With satellite transmission now a reality, television has a persuasive, global, and powerful impact. TV has evolved into a dramatic and personal mass medium. It also has prestige value, in addition to playing a vital role in our socioeconomic progress. Television is also an effective medium for developing news. Both public relations professionals and the news media professionals rely on one other for information. Depending on the situation, a public relations practitioner in a public library may approach television with a news release about his organisation or anything similar, or a television station representative may approach him for a news item. Public relations professionals can take advantage of the media by sending TV stations taped news releases. If the press release is overly sales-oriented or looks like a paid commercial advertisement, it will be rejected. The best strategy is to use a low-key approach in which the organisation delivers data, information, or educational materials. Because they are non-commercial, non-profit organisations they have a better chance of publicising their operations through Door Dashing. Apart from using short telefilms or sponsoring popular programmes, industrial news, business programmes, development features, interviews, presentations, discussions, and analytical programmes can all be used to great advantage.

Radio: Radio, like television, can be utilised for public relations. In Nigeria, radio is heard by more than 90% of the population. It's a flexible movable medium that no other medium can match. Even though radio is a mass medium, it has the features of a direct personal medium because it primarily communicates through the spoken word and the human voice. Radio is used by public library public relations personnel to reach out to the public.

Social media applications: Since its beginning in 1996, social media has managed to reach half of the world's population of 7.87 billion people. In the last decade, social networking platforms' overall user population has nearly tripled, from 970 million in 2010 to 4.48 billion in July 2021. Furthermore, regardless of age or internet connection, 56.8% of the world's population, or 7.87 billion individuals, use social media. As of September 2021, 93.33 percent of the 4.8 billion internet users are active (Adeleke, &Nwalo,2017). However, the phenomenal year-over-year growth of new users on the platforms is diminishing. It currently relies on the continued increase in the number of individuals with internet connection and cellphones, especially in developing countries.

As a result of the preceding data, any Public Library that implements these social media technologies can reach millions of people in both urban and rural areas. Businesses have recognised the latent potential of social media in communicating with their customers, but many are still struggling to figure out how to use it successfully. Because they were never taught in this area of communication, many social media managers are confused about how to use their companies' social media platforms successfully (Patel, 2015).

Social media has transformed the way individuals engage with one another since the early 2000s. Individuals in the United States spend 28% of their internet time on social media networks (Cooper, 2015). Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram are currently the most popular social networking platforms. Businesses have come to see social media as a tool for communication and new ways to form relationships with their audiences as time has passed. Public relations officers in public libraries could also use Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube to give effective services to the public by answering inquiries and providing information without the public having to physically visit the library.

METHODOLOGY

Correlational designs was used in this investigation. The goal of a correctional study is to determine the association between two or more variables. Simply put, a correlation coefficient represents the degree of link. According to Unanka(2008) Correlational design aim at investigating the extent to which variations in one factor relate to variations in one or other factors on the bases of or as evidenced by correlation coefficients. The study's sample size is 144 users. These are professionals and paraprofessionals working in public libraries across the sixStates of the South -West of Nigeria. They are all employees who provide services to users in the six states' headquarters and of the six states branch libraries, which are located in both urban and rural areas.

The survey included all professional and paraprofessional personnel from the six state public libraries in Nigeria's south west. Two rating scales were utilised as data gathering instruments. The first rating scale has 75 items and is termed "Public Relation Tools Scale (PRTS)," The instruments were designed utilising the four-point scale. Very High

Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent (VLE); Very Effective (VE), Effective (E), Fairly Effective (FE), and Less Effective (LE) are used to rank Clusters A and D. They were given 4, 3, 2, and 1 point weightings, accordingly. Cluster A's data will be correlated with the data from the other clusters.

The researchers administered the instruments themselves, with the assistance of two research assistants from each of the Public Libraries under investigation. This lasted a total of six (6) weeks. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation, generally known as the Pearson "r" statistics, was utilised to answer research question 1 and 2.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1

RQ1: What is the coefficient of relationship between social media tools and effective library services in Public Libraries in South-West, Nigeria?

Table 1: Summaries of simple linear coefficient of relationship (Pearson r) between social media tools (X) and effective library services (Y) in Public Libraries in South-West, Nigeria

V	n	Σ	r	MR	DR	Remarks
X	144	7773	0.322	Low	Positive	Low
Y	144	8845				Positive Relationship

Variables (V), Size (n), Summation (Σ), Pearson r (r), Magnitude of Relationship (MR), Direction of Relationship (DR) and Remarks

Table 1 depicts the correlation coefficient between social media tools and effective library services in Public Libraries in Nigeria's South-West. The achieved coefficient of association is 0.322, according to the table. This result also revealed that the magnitude of the relationship coefficient is small, but the direction is positive. The magnitude and direction also show that as one variable increases, the other will increase as well. That is to say, an improvement in social media tools is linked to an improvement in effective library services. The answer to the above question is that in Public Libraries in South-West Nigeria, there is minimal positive link between social media technologies and successful library services.

Research Question 2

RQ2: What is the coefficient of relationship between electronic media tools and effective library services in Public Libraries in South-West, Nigeria?

Table 3: Summaries of simple linear coefficient of relationship (Pearson r) between electronic media tools (X) and effective library services (Y) in Public Libraries in South-West, Nigeria

V	n	Σ	r	MR	DR	Remarks
X	144	7386	0.553	Moderate	Positive	Moderate
Y	144	8845				Positive Relationship

Variables (V), Size (n), Summation (Σ), Pearson r (r), Magnitude of Relationship (MR), Direction of Relationship (DR) and Remarks.

Table 2 depicts the correlation coefficient between electronic media tools and of effective library services in Public Libraries in Nigeria's South-West. The achieved coefficient of association is 0.533, according to the table. This result also revealed that the magnitude of the relationship coefficient is moderate, with a positive orientation. The magnitude and direction also show that as one variable increases, the other will increase as well. That is to say, an improvement in electronic media tools is linked to an improvement in effective library services delivery the use in Public Libraries. The response to the above question is that in Public Libraries in South-West Nigeria, there is a moderately good association between the use of electronic media tools and the delivery of library services.

Discussion of Findings

This study also discovered a low and favourable link between social media technologies and successful library services provision at Public Libraries in Nigeria's south-west. This research indicates that while social media tools and successful library services have a minor association, it appears to be noticeable. This could indicate that what librarians learn on social media can assist them in providing good library services to their Public. Bakare,(2018). found that respondents were aware of all of the SMTs specified in the study, the study showed that Chatting tools like Facebook Messenger, Blackberry Messenger, WhatsApp, Google Talk, and MSN had the highest level of accessibility, indicating that they are the most widely used in all of the libraries sampled. Blogging tools like WordPress and Blogger had the least access, indicating that they are the least widely used in all of the libraries sampled. The study also indicated that the majority of students used SMT's Library Services from their classrooms or lecture halls, while a small percentage used the services off-campus.

The researchers also discovered that access to electronic media tools and effective library services delivery at Public Libraries in South-West Nigeria had a moderate, favourable, and significant relationship.

This finding indicates that usage of electronic media tools have a beneficial impact on successful library services delivery in Public Libraries in Nigeria's South-West. This is because as librarians improve their use of electronic media tools such as E-mail (Instant Message), Teleconferencing, Mobile phones/ Telephones, Digital Radio, Computer, e-books, E-journals, E-magazines, Websites, and OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue), they will be better equipped to improve their library services delivery. This research supports Nageswari and Thanuskodi's(2021) findings, which indicated that all customers are aware of public libraries' alternative services; they effectively use them, and Public Libraries are seen as the most important since they enhance literacy rates through the use of electronic media. Similarly, Leo-Ogbonna (2019) discovered a strong positive link between electronic media-based library services and library information resource consumption among undergraduate students in the South East of Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study looked into public relations tools in relation to Public Library services in Nigeria's South-West. There are two research questions. The study also reviewed related publications. The study used the simple and multiple linear methods in a correlation research design. The sample size for this research was 144, these are professionals and paraprofessionals working in Public Libraries across the six states in South- West, Nigeria. This study's sample size of 144, is the same as the population number, making it a census study. In this study, data was collected using two instruments (rating scales). The instruments were constructed by the researchers themselves and validated.

The study found a low, positive, and significant relationship between use of social media tools and effective library services delivery in Public Libraries in South-West Nigeria, and significant relationship between access electronic media tools and effective library services delivery in Public Libraries in South-West Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher suggests that:

- a) Library management and government should expose librarians to conferences and workshops where they can learn how to use social media platforms to improve service delivery in libraries.
- b) The government should ensure that Public Libraries have proper access to electronic media instruments. This will aid in improving the capacity of the workforce to perform services.
- c) The state government should ensure that Public Libraries are available in remote areas. This will help to raise service delivery awareness. The rural people's social, educational, and mental awareness of what is going on in the state will improve.

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