ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ / RESEARCH ARTICLE

ARE WE STILL FINE WITH TRADITIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES? EVIDENCE FROM STUDENT PATRONS AND LIBRARY PERSONNEL OF HEZEKIAH OLUWASANMI LIBRARY, NIGERIA

Olayinka MAKINDE[1]
Mohammed YABAGI[2]

ABSTRACT

**Geleneksel Halkla İlişkiler Stratejilerinde Hâlâ İyi Miyiz?
Nijerya Hezekıah Oluwasanmı Kütüphanesi Öğrenci Kullanıcıları ve Kütüphane
Personelinden Elde Edilen Bulgular**

Akademik kütüphaneler, mevcut kütüphane kaynakları ve hizmetleri hakkında farkındalık eksikliği nedeniyle öğrenci kullanıcılarını kaybediyor olabilir. Bu farkındalık, kullanıcıya özel halkla ilişkiler (Hİ) stratejileri kullanılarak yaratılabilir. Bu çalışma, dijital çağa rağmen bir akademik kütüphanedeki geleneksel halkla ilişkiler stratejilerini incelemiştir. Çalışma, kütüphane personeline (N=48) ve öğrencilere (N=370) iki anket uygulayarak tarama araştırma tasarımını benimsemiştir. Elde edilen veriler yüzde ve frekans sayıları kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar, çalışma kütüphanesinde geleneksel halkla ilişkiler stratejilerinin iyi bir şekilde kullanıldığını ve medya faaliyetlerinin en az kullanıldığını göstermiştir - sosyal medyadaki gelişmelere rağmen geleneksel halkla ilişkiler stratejileri geçerliliğini korumaktadır. Halkla ilişkiler stratejilerinin önündeki en büyük zorluk, nitelikli kütüphane uzmanlarının yokluğu olarak belirlenmiştir. Kütüphanenin, dijital halkla ilişkiler stratejilerini yürütmek için gerekli teknolojinin yokluğunda, geleneksel halkla ilişkiler stratejilerini daha da ileriye götürmek için çalışanlarını akıllıca kullanmaya çalışması önerilmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Akademik kütüphaneler, kütüphane ve bilgi hizmetleri, bilgi profesyonelleri, medya faaliyetleri, halkla ilişkiler

1-Adeleke Üniversitesi

2-Federal Gashua Üniversitesi

Introduction

In a changing world, where information is abundantly produced, the methodical usage and relevance of information have to be declared by librarians to students (Agboke & Effiong, 2020). Currently, the library is not the only option for students in obtaining needed information (Otike et al., 2022; Yi, 2016) – the internet has opened up other choices. Hence, the library attempts to gain the confidence of its patrons with the concept of public relations (PR). The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA)

in 2022 stated that PR is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their public. PRSA underlined that PR embraces among other things: (1) anticipating, analysing and interpreting public opinion, attitudes and issues that might have an impact, for good or ill, on the operations and plans of the organisation; (2) protecting the reputation of an organisation; (3) researching, conducting and appraising programmes of action and communications to achieve the informed public understanding necessary to the success of an organisation's aims - including marketing and community relations; and (4) supervising the formation of content to motivate customer engagement and generate leads. PR is a practice that boosts an institution's image (Nnadozie et al., 2015) and in the context of librarianship, it deals with communication between a library and its stakeholders, particularly the patrons (Dowd, 2014). Supporting this claim, Songu et al. (2019) pinpoint that in libraries, PR is essential because it: (1) helps to establish the connection between libraries and their patrons; (2) develops reciprocal understanding and goodwill; (3) evaluates patrons' perception and attitude; (4) identifies the policies of libraries bearing in mind the patrons' interests; and (5) executes the programmes for communication with the patron community.

Isaac (2012) argues that PR emphasises more on marketing the library institution and the diverse resources and services offered and spreading the message of the library's set mission and goals to the community. In their depiction of PR, Khan and Mumu (2016) mention Public Relations and Marketing (PRM) stressing that the praxis helps users to get the requisite resources, establishing

goodwill in the community and raising the use of available resources and services. From many studies, particularly in Nigeria, many people even library professionals confuse PR with marketing. The two concepts though similar have fundamental differences. Martinelli (2022) unequivocally states that PR talks about building relationships between an institution/individual and the intended public to manage what the customer intends to achieve whereas marketing stresses the promotion of products and services for revenue purposes. Direct Development (2021) adds that even with social media challenging customary definitions of PR and marketing, with some communication platforms merging the two concepts, a marked difference still exists - PR focuses on maintaining a positive reputation for the organisation generally while marketing focuses on promoting a specific product, service or idea and increasing sales. This study maintains that the conventional academic library does not have the main drive of making a profit, especially in the context of her transactions with patrons. Academic libraries are deeply rooted in assisting patrons to achieve the learning, teaching and research functions of higher institutions through unbiased and non-profit information resources and services provided. Ultimately, the PR process should be consciously planned to manifest the shared perceptions and attitudes held by both library staff and patrons to appreciably hasten the library's development cycle, expanding patrons' awareness and assisting to advance fast growth (Khan & Mumu, 2016). PR process should involve PR strategies that should be designed for the customers (Holmes, 2018).

PR strategies involve planned activities, tools, methods and programmes initiated by libraries to ensure that they remain relevant and communicate a positive product or service image with the patrons in mind (Abdulsalami & Umar, 2018; Ozioko, 2019). Traditional PR is the straight method of PR that applies conventional means such as events, leaflets, magazines and newspapers to boost product or service awareness (Moore, 2022; Squaremedia, 2021). Ozioko (2019) itemises that traditional strategies include improved readers' services, library week, library displays and exhibitions, a lounge for light reading refreshment/relaxation corners and the use of directional guides. Yi

(2016) lists traditional PR strategies such as booklets, brochures, signage, and giveaways and also emphasises one-to-one conversations, classroom instruction, training sessions, workshops and face-to-face events as the most effective techniques escalating the relevance and effectiveness of "human touch" including individual and group interactions. Benson et al. (2016) maintain that in this modern time, patrons easily identify and access information resources and services using IT devices with connection to the Internet and other associated technologies. However, despite revolutions such as social media and its recent application to PR in academic libraries, traditional PR strategies remain very germane (Benson et al., 2016). Benson and his colleagues further accentuate that traditional PR strategies such as face-to-face interaction with the user community and seminars/workshops are prioritised and adopted over technology-aided techniques by academic librarians. Many academic libraries are still not adopting digital technology to communicate with their patrons in developing countries (Otike et al., 2022). The Association of College and Research Libraries [ACRL] (2018) underscores that evolving technology has created new challenges for media activities in academic libraries. For instance, Haruna et al. (2018) underline that library management has not considered advocacy and some online measures via social media as an important PR technique. This might not be unconnected to academic libraries attending to literates who are non-social media friendly patrons especially when it comes to communicating with librarians (Amarakoon & Seneviratne, 2014; Dickson & Holley, 2010).

Additionally, Garaufallou et al. (2013) uncover that despite the knowledge that improving awareness of library resources and services can bring about the increased use of libraries, international academic libraries' studies reveal that patrons have not been frequently updated in this regard. Will it be well placed if academic libraries adopt more traditional PR strategies to create a high level of awareness for her library resources and services because adequate IT infrastructure has not been put in place in several academic libraries as well as the lack of ICT skills by academic librarians – especially in Nigeria (Etim et al., 2015; Shidi & Sambe, 2019; Udofot & Sambe, 2021)?

Consequently, PR strategies will be more meaningful and effective when they are tailored to contextually reach particular patrons that the library serves (Ozioko, 2019). Studies like Peacemaker et al. (2016), Taylor and Francis Group (2014) and Witte (2014) further confirm the several aforementioned assertions about social media. From these studies, social media is observed to have characteristics such as: being informal; random; with restricted reach; a discriminating low response; limited interaction; no written policy; lack of tools for impact measurement and inadequate content strategies. Hence, it is pertinent to ask some questions from the student patrons and library personnel revolving around - how accessible library and information services are considering the current state of PR strategies, the verification of the use of PR strategies, satisfaction with PR strategies and the effect of utilised PR strategies.

Theoretical Model
To understand PR, Grunig and Hunt (1984) developed four models of PR that describe the field's various management and organisational practices. The models serve as guidelines to create programmes, strategies, and tactics. They include the press agent/publicity model, public information model, two-way asymmetrical model and two-way symmetrical model. The press agent/publicity model is a one-way form of communication involving communications that professionals use to persuade and shape the thoughts and opinions of key audiences. An example is news media outlets. The public information model is one-way but different from the former by presenting more accurate information rather than manipulative tactics. Examples include press releases and newsletters. The third model, the two-way asymmetrical model is a way of communicating with key audiences in a more scientifically persuasive way. This involves understanding the audiences' attitudes and behaviours. A typical example is advertising. The last one is the two-way symmetrical model. This model argues that the PR practitioner should serve as a liaison between the organisation and the key public, rather than as a persuader. The two-way symmetrical model is deemed the most ethical model, one that professionals should aspire to use in their everyday tactics and strategies (Garg,

2018). Academic librarians have employed some of these PR models in creating library and information services awareness to their patrons, particularly the press agent/publicity model and public information model. Odede (2012) also highlights that PR utilises four principal methods to communicate with the public namely advertising, lobbying, publicity, and press agents.

Statement of the Problem

PR appears not to be prioritised and recognised in Nigerian university libraries – it is an abandoned activity possibly because librarians are ignorant of its potential (Adewusi, 2015) forgetting that it is necessary for the survival and continued relevance of the library in today's world of competition (Ozioko, 2019). There is a general belief that many libraries are underutilised because of the lack of users' awareness about the available resources and services in libraries (Ameen, 2015). An important way of creating awareness for library resources and services is through PR. There has been the use of traditional PR strategies in the past, but with IT, social media became admired as adopted by some academic libraries for library PR. Despite this adoption, in many circles, the lack of putting in place IT infrastructure by institutions and the lack of full adoption of social media have not helped academic libraries' PR strategies. This brings to mind the continued use of traditional PR strategies that allow physical contact with clientele – a form of physical assurance of the creation of awareness for library and information services.

Then again, concerning the promotion of library resources and services – which is a key aspect of PR, Yi (2016) stated that the literature is compelling in its discussion regarding its relevance, especially as it relates to sustaining library visibility in contemporary times. However, very limited studies have been conducted relating to PR strategies in academic libraries in Nigeria. Over a decade ago, Nwezeh (2010) carried out a study that is similar to the current one but PR was not separated from marketing as a separate concept. Many years after, based on anecdotal evidence, scholars in Nigeria are yet to know the importance of PR in academic libraries. Hence, an academic study of the foundational and traditional PR strategies is worth researching from the views of library personnel

and student patrons considering the not-too-good adoption of social media by Nigerian academic libraries. This may perhaps assist in redesigning and raising more awareness about PR strategies and their adoption, especially the traditional strategies that might help the reshaping of digital-tailored ones.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were formulated for the study:

1. To find out how accessible library and information services are at Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library from students' perspective.
2. To verify the use of PR strategies at Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library from library personnel' and students' perspectives.
3. To find out how satisfied students are with PR strategies being employed at Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library.
4. To ascertain the effect of utilised PR strategies on students at Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library.
5. To identify the challenges undermining PR strategies at Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library from library personnel' and students' perspectives.

Materials and Methods

The study adopted the survey research design. The population for this study comprised all the professional and paraprofessional staff (constituting the library personnel) and the student patrons of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library [the main library of Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria]. Obafemi Awolowo University is one of the foremost universities in Nigeria (one of the first-generation universities) established by the Western region government of Nigeria in 1962. Since then, the library has been a leader in library innovation and development. The number of library personnel working in the library summed up to 67 across all units while the number of students [both undergraduates and postgraduates] stood at 24,086 based on preliminary inquiries made by the researchers.

The researcher employed a multistage sampling technique for the study. Firstly, the researchers engaged the purposive sampling technique in choosing Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library. This was largely because it is the main library of a

first-generation university with sufficient respondents (library personnel and students) and experiences needed to gather data for this survey. Secondly, the total enumeration method was used for the study's library personnel. This implied that all the professional and paraprofessional staff of the Library were covered because of the small size. Thirdly, the quota sampling technique was used to determine the sample size of the student users. Two per cent of the total student patrons (24,086), calculated at 482 were administered the questionnaire as they came to the library using the different sections of the library. After the administration of the instruments, a response rate of 71.6% was achieved for students while 77.0% was realised for library personnel.

Two sets of questionnaires were designed by the researchers to elicit data from the two categories of respondents - one for the library personnel and the other for the students. Each set of questionnaires was divided into sections A and B. Section A contained the demographic information of the respondents while section B addressed the research objectives. For the personnel's questionnaire, section A addressed three demographic questions, such as gender, age, and position; and section B addressed three main questions, such as the library and information services available at the library, the PR strategies in use and the challenges that undermined the PR strategies employed. For the students' questionnaire, section A addressed four demographic questions, such as gender, age, level, and faculty; and section B addressed five main questions, such as the level of students' agreement with the library and information services available, PR strategies in use, the influence of the strategies on students, level of satisfaction derived from the use of PR strategies and the challenges that undermined the PR strategies. The questionnaires were based on five Likert-scale response formats: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree; Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied and Very Dissatisfied; and Extremely Challenging, Very Challenging, Moderately Challenging; Slightly Challenging and Not at all Challenging. For the various Likert scale responses, frequency/percentage was used for analysis.

For credibility, Blaikie (2003) maintains that ordinal data may be described using the frequency/percentage of responses. Furthermore, Sullivan (2013) and Makinde and Makinde (2020) underline that descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations, have unclear meanings when applied to Likert scale responses. Hence, this study presents its results in support of Blaikie (2003), Sullivan (2013), and Makinde and Makinde (2020) who submit that researchers can employ frequency count and/or percentage of responses for the analysis of ordinal data. Face and content validity were used to check the questions in the questionnaires. Two experts checked the constructs and indicators in the questionnaires and their suggested modifications were effected. These suggestions improved the language and quality of the research instrument. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was carried out at Adeleke University using five staff of the main library and thirty students of the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences. Some critical suggestions were made that helped in modifying the questionnaires. Before the administration of the questionnaires, permission was obtained from the authorities of the institution and the library where data were collected. Sufficient rapport was created with the respondents. The respondents were also enlightened on the purpose of the research and assured of confidentiality and anonymity before handing over the questionnaires to them. Particularly for the students, participation was purely voluntary as they came into the library using the various units.

Results

Table 1 shows the library personnel demographic information. The gender distribution revealed that 29 (60.4%) of the respondents were males, while 19 (39.6%) were females. The age distribution indicated that 24 (50.0%) fell within the age range of 18-30 years [the highest] whereas 3 (6.3%) fell within the age of 51 years and above [the lowest]. The distribution of the respondents based on the different units in the library showed that 13 (27.1%) of the respondents were from the cataloguing and classification unit [the highest] while 2 (4.2 %) were from the Africana unit [the lowest]. A glaring revelation in the demographics of the library personnel indicated that the majority of the library personnel were in the lowest age range

(18-30 years). This showed a youthful workforce in the studied academic library implying the possibility of ample time for the implementation of the study's findings.

Table 2 shows the students' demographic information. The gender distribution revealed that 202 (54.6%) of the respondents were males, while 168 (45.6%) were females. The age distribution indicated that 126 (34.1%) fell within the age range of 21-25 years [the highest] whereas 49 (13.2%) fell within the age of 31 years and above [the lowest]. The distribution of the level of the students indicated that 122 (33%) of the respondents were in the 100 level [the highest] while 15 (4.1%) were 600 level students [the lowest]. The distribution of faculty revealed that 48 (13%) of the students were from the Faculty of Social Sciences whereas 16 (4.3%) were from the Faculty of Pharmacy [the lowest]. A conspicuous finding as regards students' demographics was that for the period of the research, students at the higher level of study (500, 600 and PG) used the library less than students at the lower level. This could be a result of more 100 and 200-level students captured in the study. Students at these levels do more assignments and library instruction and information literacy courses.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of library personnel
N=48

Demography	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	29	60.4
Female	19	39.6
Age range		
18-30	24	50.0
31-40	13	27.0
41-50	8	16.7
>51	3	6.3
Unit		
Serials	9	18.8
Circulation	4	8.3
Reference	6	12.5
Cataloguing & Classification	13	27.1
Acquisition	6	12.5
Africana	2	4.2
Documentation	4	8.3
ICT	4	8.3

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of students
N=370

Demography	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	202	54.6
Female	168	45.4
Age range		
16-20	112	30.3
21-25	126	34.1
26-30	83	22.4
>31	49	13.2
Level		
100	122	33.0
200	88	23.8
300	46	12.4
400	50	13.5
500	20	5.4
600	15	4.1
PG	29	7.8
Faculty		
Faculty of Social Sciences	48	13.0
Faculty of Technology	31	8.4
Faculty of Administration	44	11.9
Faculty of Agriculture	32	8.6
Faculty of Arts	42	11.4
Faculty of Environmental Design	18	4.9
Faculty of Education	36	9.7
Faculty of Health Sciences	22	5.9
Faculty of Law	21	5.7
Faculty of Pharmacy	16	4.3
Faculty of Sciences	31	8.4
PG	29	7.8

Accessibility of Library and Information Services from Students' Perspectives

The first objective explored the accessibility of library and information services based on the students' perspectives in the academic library (Table 3). The researchers decided to ask the patrons questions in this direction to get unbiased responses from them as 'end consumers' of library and information services. The library personnel (as providers) might not want to reveal the true picture of the library. As much as the library personnel would want their services accepted and used by patrons through the adoption of PR techniques, the researchers believe that the patrons are more advantaged when PR strategies are employed to boost library and information services with patrons' information needs being met, hence this objective. Thirteen library and information services emerged from this study and the researchers judged that PR strategies can improve currently or in the future if made available to the patrons. The majority of the library and information services were considered accessible except consultancy services and library publications. Lending services were indicated as the most accessible (which should be characteristic of any academic library) and library publications the least accessible. While several respondents deemed various library and information services accessible, the percentages for key library and information services still hovered around 50-59.9% such as Internet/computer services, reservation services, exhibition display, interlibrary loan services, electronic databases, abstracting and indexing services and newspapers/magazines (print). These are library and information services that patrons had pointed to that should be popularised and made available and accessible to satisfy their information needs.

Table 3. Accessibility of library and information services (students' perspective) N=370

Library and information services	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Lending services	123	33.2	121	32.7	44	11.9	52	14.1	30	8.1
Electronic databases	110	29.7	102	27.6	43	11.6	46	12.4	69	18.7
Interlibrary loan services	110	29.7	104	28.1	43	11.6	79	21.4	34	9.2
Reservation services	98	26.5	123	33.2	60	16.2	56	15.1	33	9.0
Provision of seating and study facilities	101	27.3	124	33.5	41	11.1	66	17.8	38	10.3
Reference services	112	30.3	122	33.0	36	9.7	56	15.1	44	11.9
Exhibition display	89	24.1	127	34.3	54	14.6	67	18.1	33	8.9
User education	101	27.3	134	36.2	45	12.2	46	12.4	44	11.9
Library publications	52	14.1	50	13.5	34	9.2	111	30.0	123	33.2
Abstracting and indexing services	79	21.4	132	35.7	45	12.2	56	15.1	58	15.6
Consultancy services	56	15.1	55	14.9	34	9.2	123	33.2	102	27.6
Newspapers/Magazines (Print)	79	21.4	121	32.7	47	12.7	68	18.4	55	14.8
Internet/Computer services	94	25.4	127	34.3	35	9.5	72	19.5	42	11.3

Use of PR strategies from Library Personnel' and Students' Perspectives

This objective is seen from the light of the library personnel knowing the traditional PR strategies that have been used by the library to create awareness for library and information services and the patrons also recognising that they affirm the use of these strategies (Tables 4 and 5). Both the library personnel and patrons unanimously agreed to the utilisation of PR strategies in the library – over two-thirds of the two categories of respondents concurred. However, both the library personnel and patrons also identified the poor use of film hours, book talks, library patronage, and media activities as PR strategies. Particularly, media activities were uncovered by the two categories of respondents as most poorly used for PR strategies. This indicator was partially raised in the set of indicators to partly point to an element of technology in PR.

Table 4. Use of PR strategies (students' perspective) N=48

PR strategies	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reader services	12	25.0	32	66.7	0	0.0	4	8.3	0	0.0
Library display & exhibitions	10	20.8	23	47.9	4	8.3	7	14.6	4	8.4
Use of library notice board	20	41.7	23	47.9	3	6.3	1	2.1	1	2.0
Library week	7	14.6	34	70.8	4	8.3	3	6.3	0	0.0
Directional guides	24	50.0	21	43.8	3	6.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Lounge for light reading Materials	18	37.6	23	47.9	2	4.2	4	8.3	1	2.0
Refreshment/relaxation corner	11	22.9	17	35.4	3	6.3	9	18.8	8	16.6
Film hours	7	14.6	4	8.3	5	10.4	14	29.2	28	37.5
Book talks	2	4.2	4	8.3	7	14.6	14	29.2	21	43.7
Book fairs	9	18.8	31	64.6	7	14.6	1	2.0	0	0.0
Good customer service	5	10.4	23	47.9	4	8.3	10	20.8	6	12.6
Library publications	7	14.6	8	16.7	7	14.6	19	39.6	7	14.5
Special events	21	43.8	23	47.9	0	0.0	4	8.3	0	0.0
Media activities	1	2.1	7	14.6	6	12.5	31	64.6	3	6.2

Table 5. Use of PR strategies (library personnel's perspective) N=370

PR strategies	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reader services	156	42.2	143	38.6	25	6.8	32	8.6	14	3.8
Library display & exhibitions	86	23.2	141	38.1	44	11.9	55	14.9	44	11.9
Use of library notice board	136	36.8	112	30.3	34	9.2	55	14.9	33	8.8
Library week	90	24.3	133	35.9	61	16.5	53	14.3	33	9.0
Directional guides	132	35.7	102	27.6	34	9.2	46	12.4	56	15.1
Lounge for light reading materials	93	25.1	110	29.7	56	15.1	67	18.1	44	12.0
Refreshment/relaxation corner	93	25.1	144	38.9	42	11.4	54	14.6	37	10.0
Film hours	14	3.8	44	11.9	33	8.9	188	50.8	91	24.6
Book talks	45	12.2	45	12.2	33	8.9	146	39.5	101	27.2
Book fairs	88	23.8	134	36.2	58	15.7	46	12.4	44	11.9
Good customer service	101	27.3	112	30.3	58	15.7	51	13.8	42	12.9
Library publications	49	13.2	55	14.9	67	18.1	133	35.9	66	17.9
Special events	100	27.0	101	27.3	45	12.2	70	18.9	54	14.6
Media activities	22	5.9	26	7.0	24	6.5	176	47.6	122	33.0

Satisfaction of Students with PR Strategies

Academic libraries will strongly want to know if the PR strategies that they have been using to create awareness for their patrons are creating the desired level of satisfaction for them. In the case of traditional PR strategies, it is more of a physical contact (face-to-face) in which the satisfaction of the patrons plays a major role in its continued application. Unquestionably, the patrons will know if the PR strategies employed by Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library satisfy them or not. The patrons judged 80% of all indicators for the construct of PR strategies to be satisfying (Table 6). This indicated a high level of patron satisfaction with the PR strategies being used at the study library. However, the majority of the patrons were not satisfied with the organisation of library-sponsored events such as library week. Inconsistency could be seen in the finding of patrons not being satisfied with a sponsored event like library week but revealing a moderate level of accessibility to library and information services such as exhibition displays. Another discrepancy was patrons indicating poor accessibility for library publications [as a library and information services] and also attesting to the usage of library publications as a PR strategy but indicating satisfaction with the distribution of library handbook or guide. All these could have been due to patrons being unable to sufficiently differentiate between a few library and information services and PR strategies and the fact that they want more of the application of these library practices in their daily dealings with library personnel. This also pointed to the library not doing well enough in the area of library publications.

Table 6. Satisfaction of students with PR strategies N=370

PR strategies	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Distribution of library handbooks or guides to users	119	32.2	121	32.7	30	8.1	49	13.2	51	13.8
2. Exhibitions, book sales and other special events	101	27.3	159	43.0	30	8.1	39	10.5	41	11.1
3. Organisation of library-sponsored events such as library week	41	11.1	39	10.5	40	10.8	110	29.7	140	37.9
4. Various engagements of students to make the university community recognise the role of the library on the campus	129	34.9	141	38.1	30	8.1	31	8.4	39	10.5
5. Regular communications channels established	131	35.4	129	34.9	40	10.8	38	10.3	32	8.6

Effect of Utilised PR Strategies on Students

This objective enabled the researchers to know if the utilised PR strategies in the study academic library have had a positive effect on students (Table 7). All five indicators showed that PR strategies emphatically impacted the students in the use of the library. Specifically was their satisfaction with the positive change that PR strategies had brought, that is, influencing and creating confidence in the students with the current library services and the fact that they had enlarged the library's influence within the student community.

Table 7. Effect of PR strategies used on students N=370

Effect of PR strategies	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. They have helped with the quality of service I get from the library	131	35.4	119	32.2	30	8.1	49	13.2	41	11.1
2. They have helped to create a good image of the library for me, which has led to an increase in the utilisation of library services and resources	102	27.6	148	40.0	31	8.4	49	13.2	40	10.8
3. They have influenced and created confidence in me with the library services offered	138	37.3	132	35.7	21	5.7	39	10.5	40	10.8
4. They have helped me in getting the rightmaterials and services that will match my need(s) per time 111	30.0	139	37.6	30	8.1	41	11.1	49	13.2		
5. They have enlarged the library's influence within the student community	138	37.3	141	38.1	21	5.7	39	10.5	31	8.4

Challenges Undermining PR Strategies from Library Personnel' and Students' Perspectives

This objective was viewed from two perspectives [students and library personnel] because these two categories will point at diverse challenges from the creator and 'end consumer' of library and information services and PR strategies. This will allow for a holistic improvement in PR strategies. By adding the percentages of moderately, very, and extremely challenging values of the Likert scale responses, the students considered the absence of qualified library professionals and the lack of skills in the use of e-resources and services available in the library as major challenges to PR strategies (Tables 8 and 9). The library personnel also viewed the absence of qualified library professionals as a major challenge to PR strategies.

Table 8. Challenges undermining PR strategies (students' perspective) N=48

PR strategies challenge	NC		SC		MC		VT		EC	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. The absence of qualified library professionals	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	15	31.3	33	68.7
2. Lack of training opportunities for the library staff	15	31.3	21	43.8	2	4.2	6	12.5	4	8.2
3. Lack of modern information and communications gadgets in the library 32	66.7	9	18.8	0	0.0	4	8.3	3	6.2		
4 Obsolete library materials	23	47.9	14	29.2	3	6.3	6	12.5	2	4.1
5. Lack of skills in the use of electronic resources and services available in the library	9	18.8	12	25.0	5	10.4	10	20.8	12	25.0

* NC- Not at all challenging, SC - Slightly challenging, MC - Moderately challenging, VT - Very challenging, EC - Extremely challenging

Table 9. Challenges undermining PR strategies (library personnel's perspective) N=370

PR strategies challenge	NC		SC		MC		VT		EC	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. The absence of qualified library professionals	43	11.6	39	10.5	34	9.2	119	32.2	135	36.5
2. Lack of training opportunities for the library staff	112	30.3	132	35.7	44	11.9	50	13.5	32	8.6
3. Lack of modern information and communications gadgets in the library 123	33.2	143	38.6	22	5.9	34	9.2	48	13.1		
4 Obsolete library materials	99	26.8	152	41.1	30	8.1	44	11.9	45	12.1
5. Lack of skills in offering electronic resources and services available in the library	143	38.6	136	36.8	33	8.9	44	11.9	14	3.8

Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was academic library's traditional PR strategies examination in the context of a university library. In achieving this, the study considered the accessibility of library and information services that PR strategies will ultimately create awareness for, the verification of PR strategies as used in the library, the gratification of users with PR strategies, the effect of the utilised PR strategies and the challenges undermining PR strategies. These objectives were differently viewed from the perspectives of student patrons and library personnel. The majority of the patrons point to the fact that there are sizable numbers of offered library and information services that can be accessible to satisfy their information needs. However, these library and information services, especially consultancy services and library publications need further promotion to the patrons and can assuredly be achieved by PR strategies and calculated provision. But, traditional PR strategies as indicated by both library personnel and students have been well employed with just a few poorly utilised [that is, film hours, book talks, and library patronage]. Media activities as a PR strategy are least utilised as demonstrated by the two categories of respondents in line with Benson et al. (2016) who underlined that traditional strategies are prioritised and of course, adopted over technology-aided techniques. Also in support of this stance, Yi (2016) pointed forward to traditional PR strategies as the most effective techniques due to the importance attached to interpersonal relationships and the physicality of these techniques. This may not be unconnected to the technology infrastructural lapses and some academic libraries being late adopters in developing countries (ACRL, 2018; Otike et al., 2022).

Furthermore, this study contributes to the extant literature on the changing nature of PR strategies by the way of IT while also emphasising Ozioko (2019) that the PR practice will be more meaningful and effective when planned PR strategies are individualised to contextually reach particular users that the library serves. Traditional PR strategies are still very important despite social media breakthroughs and their decent application in academic libraries, particularly in the developed world (Benson et al., 2016). The majority of the patrons in this study despite being students who are young and expected to be technology-welcoming demonstrated that they are satisfied with traditional PR strategies placing value on physical interaction with library personnel. Even with the inconsistency of patrons not being satisfied with a sponsored event like the library week but moderately embracing access to exhibition display, there is still a strong indication of the students desiring physical events. Many students as key audiences in an academic institution believe that the library and its professionals should do more of liaison than persuasion since the two-way symmetrical model is observed to be the most ethical that library professionals are expected to adopt as a strategy (Garg, 2018). Despite the argument of many IT experts on the ubiquity of technology, especially social media, the responses of the students are clear that while academic libraries may aspire to deploy technology in library activities, patrons' and providers' all-important standpoints and infrastructural realities must be considered. It is not surprising that Khan and Mumu (2016) stressed that the PR process should be consciously planned to manifest the shared perceptions and attitudes held by both library staff and patrons to expand library growth and users' awareness of library resources and services.

With the effect of traditional PR strategies having strong implications on the students with all the indicators coming out positively indicating a gratifying library experience, there is the need for the continued but improved employment of these strategies. In the days of the shrinking library budgets, funds availability for technological expansion is not encouraging. The purchase of data for library personnel by the management of higher institutions and academic libraries to operate their social media handles is difficult not to talk of the library personnel buying data from their meagre salaries. Fundamentally, the library should endeavour to judiciously use its employees to further drive traditional PR strategies in the absence of needed technology to drive digital PR strategies. This is in concurrence with Abdulsalami (2018) and Ozioko (2019) that emphasised PR strategies to involve manageable and planned activities and programmes initiated by libraries to ensure that they remain relevant with the resources and ser-

vices they offer in the changing information space. The library personnel and students in this study reveal challenges hindering PR strategies from their diverse perspectives. The students emphasise the lack of qualified library professionals and skills in the use of e-resources and services available in the library to execute PR strategies. The library personnel corroborate the students in saying that the lack of qualified library professionals is indeed a major challenge to PR strategies execution. The challenges indicated by the patrons are in line with Garaufallou et al. (2013). They point to some international studies uncovering that with increasing awareness of the capabilities of library resources and services to the users, the users are still not periodically updated. This is also in agreement with academic libraries many a times attend to literates who are non-social media-friendly patrons especially when it comes to communicating with librarians (Amarakoon & Seneviratne, 2014; Dickson & Holley, 2010). This is related to a lack of sufficient ICT skills and interest as indicated in the study. The indication of patrons saying that library personnel are not qualified and library personnel themselves supporting this can be connected to inadequate infrastructure in academic libraries. This shows that the providers of library and information services cannot see themselves as qualified if needed technology to incorporate a practice such as PR is unavailable. The qualification factor could also be associated with so many library personnel being employed in the profession who are not trained in the art of librarianship [formal academic qualifications as obtained from qualifying and professional examinations of formally recognised institutions].

Therefore, it is recommended that:

- Based on the roles and challenges identified in this study, Nigeria's library and information science professional bodies should ensure that only library and information professionals with the requisite qualifications are employed to work in the libraries. These professionals are expected to have passion for the promotion of the profession while engaging premeditated library PR strategies as they interact with library patrons on the job.
- Academic libraries should continuously look inwards in maximising the use of their work-force to periodically use PR strategies to expose library and information services to the patrons. This can be achieved with the organisation of focused events such as book talks, film hours and library week.
- Academic libraries should boost print publications that will create awareness of their resources and services such as books, journals, and bulletins, among others.
- As much as the human touch to traditional PR strategies is promoted in this study, the library should come up with information and research literacy programmes to train students in knowing how to utilise available electronic resources and services in the library. This is because there could be a technology angle to patrons utilising some library resources and services as the study reveals their lack of skills in this regard.
- By and large, the combination of traditional and digital PR strategies should be encouraged and implemented, especially after the ICT skills of students must have been consciously improved by the organisation of ICT and information literacy programmes. This is because wider and more diverse students have to be captured in a well-structured PR strategy. This has a greater possibility of increasing library resources and services awareness and usage among patrons.

Acknowledgement

References

Abdulsalami, T. L., & Umar, I. M. (2018). Assessment of marketing strategies used for marketing information resources and services in University of Nigeria Library, Nsukka. Nasarawa Journal of Library and Information Science, 2(1), 162-173.

Adewusi, F. A. (2015). Building effective public relations in university libraries in Nigeria. Information and Knowledge Management, 5(9), 1-5.

Agboke, A. L., & Effiong, A. E. (2020). Promotional techniques used as marketing strategies for library resources and services. Research Journal of Library and Information Science, 4(2), 2934.

Amarakoon, L. R., & Seneviratne, T. M. (2014). Academic Libraries are at a cross road in the Internet era–use of social

media in promoting academic library resources and services with special reference to Facebook use: A review. https://www.academia.edu/8062971/Academic_Libraries_ are_at_a_cross_road_use_of_social_ media_in_promoting_ academic_library_resource_and_services_with_special_reference_to_Fac ebook_use_A_Review_of_Literature

Ameen, K. (2015). Use of public relations and publicity (PRP) by the public libraries in Lahore, Pakistan. New Library World, 116(7/8), 455-466.

ACRL (2018). Guideline for media r e sources in academic libraries (2018 r e v i s i o n) . https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/mediaresources

Benson, O. V., Udo-Anyanwu, A. J., & Onuoha, C. O. (2016). Strategies used in marketing library and information services in tertiary institutions in Imo State. Journal of Applied Information Science and Technology, 9(1), 144-152.

Blaikie, N. (2003). Analysing quantitative data. Sage Publications.

Dickson, A., & Holley, R. P. (2010). Social networking in academic libraries: The possibilities and the concerns. New Library World, 111(11/12), 468-479.

Direct Development (2021). PR or marketing? https://www. directdevelopmentpr.com/understandingdifference-pr-marketing/

Dowd, S. (2014). Beyond book sales: The complete guide to raising real money for your library. ALA Neal-Schuman.

Etim, B. O., Edom, E. U., & Egbuchu, C. C. (2015). The challenges of library public relations. In B. O. Edom & C. D. Nnadozie (Eds.), Elements of library public relations (pp. 218-225). Springfield Publishers.

Garoufallou, E., Zafeiriou, G., Siatri, R., & Balapanidou, E. (2013). Marketing applications in Greek academic library services. Library Management, 34(8/9), 632-649.

Garg, S. (2018). Analysing Grunig's two way symmetrical model in the context of NGOs: A case study of Bal Sahyog, Teach for India and Good Weave International. International Journal of Science and Research, 9(1), 1760-1766.

Grunig, J. E., & Hunt, T. (1984) Managing public relations. Rinehart and Winston.

Haruna, B., Madu, A. U., & Awurdi, A. (2018). Nigerian public libraries in the 21st century: Overcoming challenges through public relations and publicity activities. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 23(5), 9-15.

Holmes, T. (2018). Components of a strategic PR plan. https://akerink.com/components-of-astrategic-pr-plan/

Isaac, I. (2012). Public relations activities in academic libraries: The role of reference librarians. International Journal of

Library Science, 1(2), 38-42.

Kaba, A. (2011). Marketing information resources and services on the web: Current status of academic libraries in the United Arab Emirates. Information Development, 27(58), 58-65.

Khan, M. M., & Mumu, F, E. (2016). Public relations and marketing (PRM) exposing services in university libraries: A conceptual view. Daffodil International University Journal of Business and Economics, 10(2), 49-58.

Makinde, O. B., & Makinde, B. O. (2020). Utilisation of WhatsApp for health-related messages broadcast in Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State in Nigeria. Journal of ICT Development, Applications and Research, 2, 48-61.

Martinelli, R. (2022). The evolving world of public relations: Beyond the press release. https://psu.pb.unizin.org/ comm370/chapter/chapter-3-the-world-of-public-relations/

Moore, K. (2022). What's is the difference between traditional PR and digital PR? https://www.digitalthirdcoast.com/blog/whats-the-difference-between-traditional-pr-anddigital-pr

Nnadozie, C.O., Nnadozie, C. D., & Okeke, I. (2015). Understanding library public relations. In B. O. Edom & C.O. Nnadozie (Eds.), Elements of library public relations (pp. 153-164). Springfield Publishers.

Nwezeh, C. M. T. (2010). Public relations in Nigerian university libraries: The case of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University. The Electronic Library, 28(1), 100-107.

PRSA (2022). About public relations. https://www.prsa.org/ about/all-about-pr

Shidi, H., & Sambe, M. T. (2019). Public relations and publicity in libraries and information centers. Nats Publishing Enterprise.

Squaremedia (2021). Traditional PR Vs digital PR – how can one help the other? https://squaremedia.solutions/blog/digital-vs-traditionalpr/#:~:text=Traditional%20PR%20is%20the%20direct,towards%20your%20chosen%20target %20audience

Sullivan, G. M. (2013). Analysing and interpreting data from Likert-type scales. Journal of Graduate Medical Education, 541-542.

Odede, I, (2012). Public relations activities in an academic library: The roles of the reference librarian. International Journal of Library Science, 1(2), 38-42.

Otike, F., Bar´at, A. H., & Kiszl, P. (2022). Innovation strategies in academic libraries using business entrepreneurial theories: Analysis of competing values framework and disruptive innovation theory. The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 48(4). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2022.102537

Ozioko, R. E. (2019). Public relations practices for enhanced services delivery and librarians' image in school libraries in Abia State, South East Nigeria. Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal). Article 2288. https://digitalcommons. unl.edu/libphilprac/2288

Songu, L. H., Ifere, M. E., & Angereke, F. (2019). Keys to effective public relations in library and information centre. International Journal of Social Sciences: Current and Future Research Trends, 1-7.

Udofot, C., & Sambe, M. T. (2021). Library public relations practice management: Challenges for academic library public relations practitioners in Nigeria. Library and Information Perspectives and Research, 3(2), 64-73.

Peacemaker, B., Robinson, S., & Hurst, E. (2016). Connecting best practices in public relations to social media strategies for academic libraries. http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/ libraries_pubs/35

Taylor and Francis Group (2014). Use of social media by the library: Current practices and future opportunities. http:// www.tandf.co.uk/journals/access/white-paper-socialmedia. pdf

eWitte, G. G. (2014). Content generation and social network interaction within academic library Facebook pages. Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship, 26(2), 89-100.

Yi, Z. (2016). Effective techniques for the promotion of library services and resources. Information
Research, 21(1), Paper 702. http://InformationR.net/ir/21-1/ paper702.html