Nexus between Technological Tools of Public Relations and Public Library Services in South-West, Nigeria

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Abstract

In this study, the researchers investigated Nexus between Technological Tools of Public Relations and Public Library Services in South-West, Nigeria. The study has two hypotheses. The study adopted a correlation research design which used the simple and multiple linear methods. The population of the study is 144. These are professional and para-professional staff in public libraries in the six states of South West, Nigeria. The researchers involved the whole population as sample by using the census sampling techniques. The instruments (rating scales) was used to collect data in this study. The t-test of simple linear correlation was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Among the findings of the study are that; there is a moderate, positive and significant relationship between, electronic tools and public library services. There is a low, positive and significant relationship between social media tools and public library services. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended among others that the library management should ensure that all the public relation tools identified in this study should be applied in public libraries to enhance service delivery. The study concluded among others that, technological tools of public relation such as social media & electronic media are significantly related to effective public libraries services in South-West, Nigeria

Keywords: Utilization, Technological, Tools, Public Relations, Public Library and Services.

Introduction

Public library as organization established, supported and funded by the government or through some other forms of community organization. It is usually established to meet the informational, educational and recreational needs of members of the public in all spheres of life. It is operated by librarians and para-professionals, who are also civil servants. Five fundamental characteristics are shared by public libraries as follows: they are generally supported by taxes (usually local, though any level of government can and may contribute); they are governed by a board; they are open to all, and every community member can access their collection; use of the public library is entirely voluntary in that no one is ever forced to use the public library; and they provide basic library services to all without charges. Abumandour (2020) define public library as hubs of information, providing all kinds of knowledge available to users nationally and internationally

Public libraries exist in many countries across the world and are often considered an essential for having an educated and literate populace. Public libraries are distinct from school libraries and special libraries in that their mandate is to serve the general public's information needs rather than the needs of a particular group or sectors of the society, school, institution, or research population (Rubin, 2010). Public libraries also provide free services such as preschool story time to encourage early literacy, quiet study and work areas for students and professionals, or book clubs to encourage appreciation of literature in adults. Maximum or effective utilization of library services by the users is the main motive of a public library (Stejskal & Hajek, 2015). The general public is expected to make effective and efficient use of public libraries to satisfy their information and research needs. The satisfaction derived by users greatly influences the utilization of library services rendered by public libraries. Therefore to justify the existence of any public library, provision of effective library services is necessary to attract potential users. Providing effective library services entails offering information/services that will adequately satisfy the information needs of their clientele: Memory (CD_ROM), Digital Versatile Disc (DVD), Videos and Tapes, and Fixed telephone lines, fax machines, a printer, scanner, photocopying machine and ICT, in order to provide and communicate effectively with users and other libraries (Nwabueze & Ntogo-Saghanen, 2017).

Furthermore, Joy and Idowu (2014) opine that it is vital that the views of the service users are sought to help inform the debate about the library's performance. Satisfactory service cannot be provided unless the views of users are considered. Public libraries in Nigeria are not providing effective library services to their clientele and therefore have not been playing its supposed role nation building. Libraries must not only provide the resources but also ensure use of the resources by its clientele community. The ultimate role of the public library is to serve its users at any point in time and must be able to give out quality information services (delivery) in terms of currency, relevance, accuracy and ease of use to meet and satisfy the information needs of its users. If the library fails to meet the information needs of its users, then satisfactory and effective library services have not been rendered. In other words, the library users must be satisfied with the services

provided by the public library and the services provided must be able to meet their information needs in the right time and format as desired. Satisfaction of users' needs and attention to their complaints should be the guiding principle for effective public library services in this 21st century (Joy & Idowu, 2014). Therefore, satisfaction is a judgment on whether a user was satisfied with the service provided at the level of consumption. Satisfaction with library services is therefore a feeling of fulfillment on the part of library users.

Truly, for public libraries to provide effective services to their clientele, they must engage in public relations. Public relation is this context means that the library staff should not sit at a place and wait for users to come, rather they should be able to reach their users with needed information and through this means attract them to the library (Kwawal, 2015). He also observed that public library services are not fully exploited by their communities because they are mostly not aware of the services offered, due to the lack of publicity or public relation tools to create awareness. Therefore, public relations tools are very important to provide public library services to the general public.

Public relations can be defined as the art and science of managing relationship with the public. It attempts to establish and sustain mutually beneficial relationships between an organization (commercial or non-commercial) and the stakeholders or public (Al-Jenaibi, 2012). Public relations specialists exploit tools for effective library services to be carried out. Those public relation tools, here simply means those apparatuses, devices or equipment that are employed in the process of implementing library public relations programmes. They range from the simple and manual to the complex and electronic devices. Therefore, public relation tools in public library services are those apparatuses, devices or equipment that are used in the process of implementing library public relations programme or carrying out effective library services to users in close by or in distance environment from the public library (Okon, Uwem & Simon, 2015).

The Public Relations Tools (PRT) for effective public library services could be grouped into four types: The print media tools, audio-visual media tools(non-print) social media tools and electronic media tools (Okon, Uwem & Simon, 2015). Furthermore, Akanwa and Udo- Anyanwu (2017) classified public relation tools or resources available in any type of libraries into four groups as well. The authors grouped them into books (print media tools), non-books (Audio visual media tools), electronic resources (electronic media tools) and internet resources. For this paper the researchers focus on electronic resources electronic media tools and Social media tools. Social media Tools is called also "social network, social software, social computing and Web 2.0". It generally depicts an electronic way of providing to a large number of people separated by distance un-impeded access to information using the internet and other elements of electronic information superhighway. Public library services through these tools faster. Examples of social media tools include: InoReader, Feedly, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Myspace, Flicker, WeChat, RSS, Limo, Whastapp etc. These tools are built on social interaction between groups of person in the community (Okereke & Oghenetega, 2014).

Lastly, electronic media tools, according to Chuwueke, Nnadozie, Olowookere and Josephe (2016) electronic media tools are platforms that use electronic means for the end user to access content. Public library staff could utilize these public relations tools to reach out to people who may not physically be in the library. These media are vital products for public relation specialists for creation and dissemination of information. They ensure spontaneous generation and use of information by different categories of person over the same period of time. Electronic media tools

facilitate effective and fast delivery of information to a large group of persons, irrespective of geographical location. Electronic media tools for library public relations include: E-mail, teleconferencing, smartphones, smart television, computers, websites Podcast, etc. The traditional resources are converted to e-journals, e-books, e-zines, e-magazines and e-thesis which enhance online and offline visibility and utilization of information (Chuwueke, Nnadozie, Olowookere and Josephe, 2016). Despite the significant roles played by public libraries in bridging information and knowledge gap as documented so far, the services rendered by the public libraries with use of public relation tools are rarely not available in Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

The study examined public relations tools for effective public library services in South-West, Nigeria. The study was delimited to the following public libraries in South West, Nigeria namely: Ekiti State Central Public Library, Ado-Ekiti; Lagos State Central Public Library, Ikeja Lagos; Ogun State Central Public Library, Abeokuta; Ondo State Central Public Library, Akure; Osun State Central Public Library, Oshogbo; and Oyo State Central Public Library, Ibadan.

The study also covered public relations tools such as, electronic media tools and social media tools as well as the services provided by public libraries with the use of these tools to achieve effectiveness in their daily activities. Few examples of the above tools covered by the study are: smart mobile phones, e-journals, e-book, e-newspapers, Internet/web, e-handbills, e-flyers, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Myspace, etc.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested each at 0.05 level of significance:

H01: The coefficient of relationship between electronic media tools and library services in public libraries in South-West, Nigeria is not significant.

H0₂: There is no significant coefficient of relationship between social media tools and library services in public libraries in South-West, Nigeria.

Review Related Literature

Library public relations is a deliberate, planned, and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between the library and the publics (users) public relation activities help to provide a coordinated effort to communicate a positive image of the library and promote the availability of the library's materials, programmes, and services. The importance of public relations activities cannot be overlooked in any library; especially in public libraries. The significant of public libraries specifically cannot be over

emphasized. The concept of public relations tools as an essential component of a well-managed library is not new. As early as 1958, the importance of public relations was discussed in the professional journals of the field. Since early 1970s, most public libraries have implemented at least some public relations tools to interact better with their many constituencies including patrons, community members, and governing bodies (UNESCO, 2014). According to the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) (2014). Public relation uses tools to communicate and provide effective library services to the public, namely:

Electronic Media Tools

Librarians in public libraries should lead the way in technology use among fellow residents and gain more time for the most important activity - helping users. Since the main mission of public libraries is to offer equality of access to information for every citizen, then why not be a trendsetter in digital use and implement innovative technologies and services in public libraries. Electronic media tools one of the digital sources library public relation specialists could use to reach people electronically. Public library relation officer use electronics or electromechanical energy for the end user (audience) to access the content. This is in contrast to static media (mainly print media). However, electronic media may be in either analog electronic data or digital electronic data format. Electronic tools library public relations includes: electronic mail, teleconferencing, television, radio, telephone/cell phones, desktop computer, game console, handheld devices (Chinwendu, 2015).

From the forgoing, public library relation specialists uses email, television, radio, Mobil phones, teleconferencing, etc., to reach distance users in rural area of public libraries. Electronic media tool is best form of tools to communicate and give out information in quickly ways in the 21st century. The researcher explained two example of electronic media tools below:

Smart Television: Smart television has great force and scope as a publicity medium-a medium which allows the use of the printed words, spoken word, pictures in motion, colour, music, animation and sound effects, all blended into one. With satellite communication having become a reality, the impact of TV is persuasive, worldwide and powerful. TV has come to be a dramatic and the most intimate mass medium. It has prestige value too, besides having an important role to play in our socio-economic development(Chinwendu, 2015). Hence TV is an effective medium for developmental news also. Both, the Public Relations practitioners and the mass media depend on each other for news. Depending on the occasion the Public Relations practitioner in public libraries can approach TV with a news release about his organisation and similar & a TV station representative can approach him for news.

Public Relations practitioners can make use of the medium by providing filmed news release to the TV stations. The news release will not be accepted, if it is too sales-oriented or resembles a paid commercial advertisement. The best approach will be to take a low profile approach in which the company presents facts of or information or educational nature. Non-profit organisations have better chances of publicising their activities over Door dashing as they are non-commercial. With the arrival of cable

television and growing competition among television companies, the publicist in India has unprecedented opportunities to cash in on. Industrial news, business programmes, development features, interviews, talks, discussions, analytical programmes can all be used with great advantage besides the use of short telefilms, or sponsoring of popular programmes (Public Relations Society of America, 2014)..

Radio: Radio, like TV, can be effectively used in public relations. In Nigeria the radio covers more than 90% of the population. It is a mobile medium with a flexibility no other medium can match. Even though radio is a mass medium, it possesses the qualities of a direct personal medium as it uses the spoken word and human voice for the most part to convey its message. Public library relations officers use the radio to reach people easily (Chinwendu, 2015).

Social Media Tools

Since its inception in 1996, social media has managed to infiltrate half of the 7.87 billion people in the world. Social network platforms almost tripled their total user base in the last decade, from 970 million in 2010 to the number passing 4.48 billion users in July 2021. Furthermore, Out of 7.87 billion people in the world, 56.8% of the population use social networks, regardless of age or internet access. Out of 4.8 billion internet users, 93.33% are active users as of September 2021 (Dean, 2021). The spectacular year-on-year adoption of new users on the platforms is, however, slowing down. It now relies on the continuous growth in the number of people with internet access and smartphones, particularly in developing regions.

Therefore, from the above statistics showed that once any public libraries adopted these uses of social media tools, they can reach millions of population in urban and rural area. Businesses have recognized the hidden potential of social media in interacting with their customers, but many still wrangle with understanding how to effectively put social media to use. Many social media managers are unsure of how to effectively use their businesses' social media platforms because they were never trained in this area of communication (Patel, 2015).

Since the early 2000s, social media has changed the way people interact with each other. Twenty eight percent of time that individuals in the United States spend online involves social media platforms (Cooper, 2015). Currently, the most popular social media tools are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram. Over time, businesses have grown to view social media as a tool to communicate and create new opportunities to build relationships with their audiences. In the librarianship, Public relation officer in public libraries could also use Facebook, Twitter, LinkeIn, Youtube provide effective services to the public by answering their questions and attached information needs without be in library physically.

Research Methods

This study adopted correlational design. A correctional design seeks to establish what relationship exists between two or among more variables. It simply means, the degree of relationship is expressed as a correlation coefficient. The population of the study is 144. These are professional and para-professional staff in public libraries in the six states of South West, Nigeria. They are all staff providing services to users in both headquarters and branch libraries in both urban and rural areas of the six states. The sample for the study is 144 library staff of the public

libraries studied. The population is small and therefore the researchers used the census sampling technique to sample the whole population of 144. All the professional and para-professional staff in the six state public libraries in South West, Nigeria were involved in the study.

The rating scale is title: "Public Relation Tools Scale (PRTS)" with 37 items. The instruments were designed using the four-point scale. Clusters A and B, are rated using Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent(HE), Low Extent(LE) and Very Low Extent(VLE). They were weighted with 4, 3, 2, and 1 points respectively. The t-test of simple linear correlation was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1

Ho1: The coefficient of relationship between social media tools and library services in public libraries in South-West, Nigeria is not significant.

Table 1: Summaries of statistics involved in the t-test of significance of the simple linear coefficient of relationship between social media tools and library services in public libraries in South-West, Nigeria

V	n	Σ	R	α	df	t_{cal}	$\mathbf{t_{tab}}$	Decision
X	144	7773						_
			0.322	0.05	142	4.046	1.96	Reject Ho ₃
${f Y}$	144	8845						

Variables (V), Sample Size (n), Summation (Σ), Coefficient of Relationship (r), Alpha Level (α), Degree of Freedom (df) and t-test of Significance of Simple Linear Correlation between two Variables

Table 1 shows the test of the significance of the coefficient of relationship between social media tools and library services in public libraries in South-West, Nigeria. The result entails that the degree of freedom is 142, the t-calculated value is 4.046 and t-tabulated value is 1.96. It is glaring that the t-calculated value is greater than the t-tabulated value; hence, the null hypothesis was rejected; thus drawing the inference that the coefficient of relationship between social media tools and library services in public libraries in South-West, Nigeria is significant.

Hypothesis 2

Ho2: The coefficient of relationship between electronic media tools and library services in public libraries in South-West, Nigeria is not significant.

Table 2: Summaries of statistics involved in the t-test of significance of the simple linear coefficient of relationship between electronic media tools and library services in public libraries in South-West, Nigeria

V	n	Σ	R	α	df	$t_{\rm cal}$	t_{tab}	Decision
X	144	7386						
			0.553	0.05	142	7.512	1.96	Reject Ho ₄
\mathbf{Y}	144	8845						· ·

Variables (V), Sample Size (n), Summation (Σ), Coefficient of Relationship (r), Alpha Level (α), Degree of Freedom (df) and t-test of Significance of Simple Linear Correlation between two Variables

Table 2 shows the test of the significance of the coefficient of relationship between electronic media tools and library services in public libraries in South-West, Nigeria. The result entails that the degree of freedom is 142, the t-calculated value is 7.512 and t-tabulated value is 1.96. It is glaring that the t-calculated value is greater than the t-tabulated value; hence, the null hypothesis was rejected; thus drawing the inference that the coefficient of relationship between electronic media tools and library services in public libraries in South-West, Nigeria is significant. **Discussion of Findings**

Discussion of Findings

Electronic Media Tools and Library Services in Public Libraries in South-West, Nigeria

The researchers also found out that there is a moderate, positive and significant relationship between electronic media tools and library services in public libraries in South-West, Nigeria. Electronic media tool is best form of tools to communicate and give out information in quickly ways in the 21st century. This finding reveals that electronic media tools have a positive way of affecting effective library services in public libraries in South-West, Nigeria. This is because as librarians improve on the use of the following electronic media tools, E-mail(Instant Message), Teleconferencing, Mobile phones/ Telephones, Digital Radio, Computer, e-books, E-journals, e-magazines, Websites and OPAC (Online public Access Catalogue), it will equip them with the skills and knowledge to improve their library services. This finding corroborates with Nageswari and Thanuskodi (2021) who found that all the patrons are aware of the public libraries' alternative services; they utilize them effectively and public libraries are considered to be the most essential since they improve the literacy rate through application of electronic media. Similarly, Leo-Ogbonna's (2019) findings showed that there is a high positive relationship between electronic media-based library services and the utilization of library information resources among undergraduate students in South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Relationship between Social Media Tools and Library Services in Public Libraries in South-West, Nigeria

It was also found in this study that there is a low, positive and significant relationship between social media tools and library services in public libraries in South-West, Nigeria. This finding shows that social media tools and effective library services are associated in a low manner, but their relationship seems to be significant. This shows that social media tools usage still

influence library services despite its low relationship. This could mean that what librarians learn on social media has a tendency of helping them to be effective in their library services. In line with the above finding, Bakare (2018) results showed that the respondents were aware of all the listed SMTs in the study. Chatting tools such as Facebook messenger, Blackberry messenger, WhatsApp and Google Talk, MSN had the highest level of accessibility, hence its highest adoption; Blogging such as WordPress and Blogger had the least access suggesting they are the least adopted in all the libraries sampled. The study further revealed that majority of students accessed the Library Services offered through SMT from their classrooms or lecture theatres, while the minority accessed the services from Off-campus. Similarly, Biçen and Çolaklar's (2015) results revealed that, in the Marmara region, 64% of libraries in private Tertiary institutions and 36% of libraries in public Tertiary institutions use social media tools. While 95% of public Tertiary institutions ' libraries use social media tools, 5% of them do not use them, and while 90% of the libraries of private Tertiary institutions use these tools, 10% of them do not. Thus, extent of usage of these social media tools is related with rendering services in the library.

Conclusion and Recommendations

As earlier said by the researcher public libraries exist in many countries across the world and are often considered an essential for having an educated and literate populace. Public libraries are distinct from school libraries and special libraries in that their mandate is to serve the general public's information needs rather than the needs of a particular group or sectors of the society, school, institution, or research population. This study investigated effectiveness of public relation tools for public libraries services, Nigeria. The study has two research questions. The study also reviewed some literature in related areas. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommends that;

- 1. Librarians should be exposed to conferences and workshops by the library management and government where how to use social media tools to enhance service delivery in libraries are taught to them.
- 2. The government should ensure that electronics media tools are adequately made available to public libraries. This will help to improve the staff service delivery capacity.
- 3. All the public relation tools identified in this study should be applied in public libraries to enhance service delivery.

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