

PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY: KENNETH DIKE
LIBRARY UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, OYO STATE NIGERIA

FELICIA JOHH

University Library, Bauchi State University, Gadau, Bauchi State

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to find out the public relations practices for effective service delivery in Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. It focused on how public relation can be used to improve the services of the library user and library staff. It was achieved through the following objectives; to examine public relation practices for service delivery, determine public relation effectiveness, to find out public relation challenges and suggest possible solution to the current public relations practices on service delivery in Kenneth Dike Library. A descriptive case study design was used to allow for in depth investigation and better understanding of the public relation service delivery to the users. In addition, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to collect information on the public relation practices and service delivery. The target population of the study comprises of students and library staffs. The sample size comprises of 218 which represented 2% of the entire population from the thirteen faculties of Kenneth Dike Library. Stratified Random Sampling technique was used to

Introduction:

Public relation is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization/institution/firm and its publics (Cutlis and Center, 1978). The users and customers of the services provided are lured by the efficient services offered in a bid to complete other players in the market. To achieve competitive advantages, organizations use marketing tools in good public relations. Roberts and Blandy, (1989) described public relations as a management function of managing character, through which public and private organizations seek to win and retain the understanding, sympathy, and support of those concerned with the services rendered by organizations. By extension,

select a sample size from the population. The study structured questionnaires and unstructured interview to collect data for the study. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data at 5% level of significance. Regression analysis was used to establish the strength of the relationship. The study concluded that public relation practice should plan and sustained to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization/institution/firm and the public. It is clear that a public relation division is crucial in any organization including the library, any activity done in the library either directly or indirectly can be viewed as a public relation activity as long as it appears to promote the public image of the library. The study recommended that library authority should focus on proper staff straining to improve the professionalism in the library. Librarians must themselves take initiatives to improve interpersonal relationships with library users. Personal relationships and collaboration (including welcoming publicity in education programs) are a crucial matter towards the development of public relation.

Keyword: *Public Relation, Library, Library Service, Service Delivery*

Public relation is therefore a marketing tool use to manage the relationship between an organization and its diverse customers through the use of effective communication, to foster mutual understanding, realize organizational goals while preserving the interest of the public (Israel, 2010).

Coskun (2007) reiterate the public relations is a function of human resource that is generally recognized in every human activity in areas like business, religion, education, government, social and civic welfare. Coskun further explain that public relations as a process is intended to influence the public opinions and views. Every organization needs public relation to achieve success, because public relations are expected to respond to public perceptions and opinions, to new values and other changes of the organization's environment. With the main objective of good public relations being to advertise market, lobby and keep the users/customers/general public interest first, any organization destined for success needs a public relations manager. Not all bureaucratic organizations have this kind of a position though.

A good example is a university library. A serious student will want to visit a library to access materials and information that could be expensive and inaccessible elsewhere. The library and staff would feel they do not have to

market their services unless very special material is on offer whose eligibility expires within a short period of time. Library staff would want to advise monthly magazines, journals, newspapers and editorial materials to get back the investment during the procurement and acquisition process.

The librarian plays the role of a public relations officer in the library. He/she goes outside the confines of the library to carve a good image of the library in the minds of the potential users. A good number of libraries especially the university libraries offer so many commercial services unknown to users; it is the duty of the librarian to inform the public about the services (Israel, 2012). The increase was to cater for the increasing population of its users at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels as well as other members of the university community. Presently, the library maintains a card catalogue arrangement according to author, title and subject for easy identification. The library uses the library of congress classification scheme.

Conceptual Review

The library was established out of the desire of the founding fathers and matriarch of the icon of higher education in Nigeria, to cut a niche for research and sound teaching in the University of Ibadan. It was a massive project with great vision of sustained quality services and enduring capacity for expansion.

Public Relation Practices for Service Delivery

Many concepts in social sciences lack homogeneity on their exact origin. Unlike scientific concepts, most social science concepts and theories lack a clear proponent who can be traced back as being the primary founder. The concept of public relations is no different. This is because; many socialist appeared to use similar ideas in politics, creation of organizations and general management of businesses. This creates a difficulty in understanding a unified theory that is widely accepted to the events, that eventually culminated into the concept of modern Public Relations, (Pearson, 1992) reiterates that is one of the problems with study of Public Relations History is that there is no single history of its development worldwide; instead, there are a number of different and unrelated histories.

The definition of the term Public Relation itself was a matter of debate with many educationalists and socialist giving varying definitions. In the early 1990's **Rex Harlow**, an American Academician in his research postulate to have identified

472 different definitions of Public Relations all either having or lacking some elements. He put together all their common elements to produce the first global definition:

Public Relations is the distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and co-operation between an organization and its publics; involving the management problems and issues; helps management to be informed on the responsive of public opinion, defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast off an effectively utilized change as an early warning to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound and ethical communication as its principal tools.

Critics of Harlow then said that precisely because this definition tries to cover everything, it becomes too detailed and is therefore useless. In addition, many argued that it is not possible to provide a definition for a profession that covers such diverse practices, ranging from the campaigning activities of Greenpeace to getting coverage for an out-of-favour actor in the tabloids.

In 1978, at the first meeting in Mexico, the World Assembly of Public Relations agreed upon a definition that would be accepted by all (The New Mexico definition):

Public Relations is the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organization leaders and implementing planned programs of action which will serve both the organization's and the public interest. (Warnaby and Moss, 2002: 7).

The concept itself dates back form organizational events in the 19th Century across Europe and America which eventually 'gave birth' to concept of marketing, trend established and more interest to public needs.

The following research questions were developed to guide the study.

1. What are the various public relation practice carried out by the management of the Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Oyo State?

2. How effective is public relations practices in the Kenneth Dike library, University of Ibadan, Oyo State?
3. What are the public relations related problems faced by the staff and management of the Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Oyo State in carrying out their daily activities?
4. What are the solutions to public relations problems in the Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Oyo State?

Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey design. The purpose of descriptive surveys, according to (Kothari, 2004), is to collect detailed and factual information that describes an existing phenomenon.

The target population of the study were the undergraduate library users and circulation librarians of the Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan. The population comprised of 12, 125 undergraduate and 32 librarian of the Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan. The students were drawn from all the thirteen faculties of the University. These faculties are the faculty of Agriculture, Arts, Basic Medical Sciences, Clinical Science, Dentistry, Education, Law, Pharmacy, Public Health, Sciences, Technology, the Social Sciences and Veterinary. The breakdown is as follows: However, the sampling size for this research was 218 representing 2% of all the 11,202 registered students in the university and the ones who normally seek library services. This proportionality distribute among the undergraduate students across the faculties base on the sampling size allotted to each faculty. The population also includes 32 librarians who will be sampled with total enumeration sampling technique.

Faculty	Total Number of Students (100-600 Level)
Agriculture and Forestry	1296
Arts	1486
Basic Medical Science	315
Clinical Science	773
Dentistry	157
Education	1466
Law	685
Pharmacy	388

Public Health	127
Sciences	1779
Technology	1112
Social Sciences	1201
Veterinary	417
Total	11,202

Instrument

A modified questionnaire tagged was titled “public relations practice for effective service delivery in Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria” and unstructured interview was used for the collection of data on the study. The questionnaire was specifically designed to accomplish the objectives of the study. The first section collected information such as age, sex, experience, professional status, marital status, position, and so on. The second section contained the items. The structural interview was carried out on the University Librarian.

To ensure some consistency of the instrument, a pre-test was conducted by administering the developed questionnaires to some of the subjects in the pilot study area but outside the actual study group. The scored items were divided into two groups using the even and odd number split method. The result was managed manually and comparison where made between the two scores using the spearman Brown prophecy formula. The instrument is said to be reliable if the reliability coefficient is between 0.75 and 1 (Orodho, 2009).

Procedure

The researcher travelled to university library in the study and administered the instrument to library personnel after the approval of their management. Following the instructions on the instrument, the questionnaires were filled and returned.

Data Analysis

The data collected through questionnaires were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study used descriptive statistical tools to analyze quantitative data, which was obtained from the study. Regression analysis was used to establish the relationship between public relation practices and service delivery.

Result

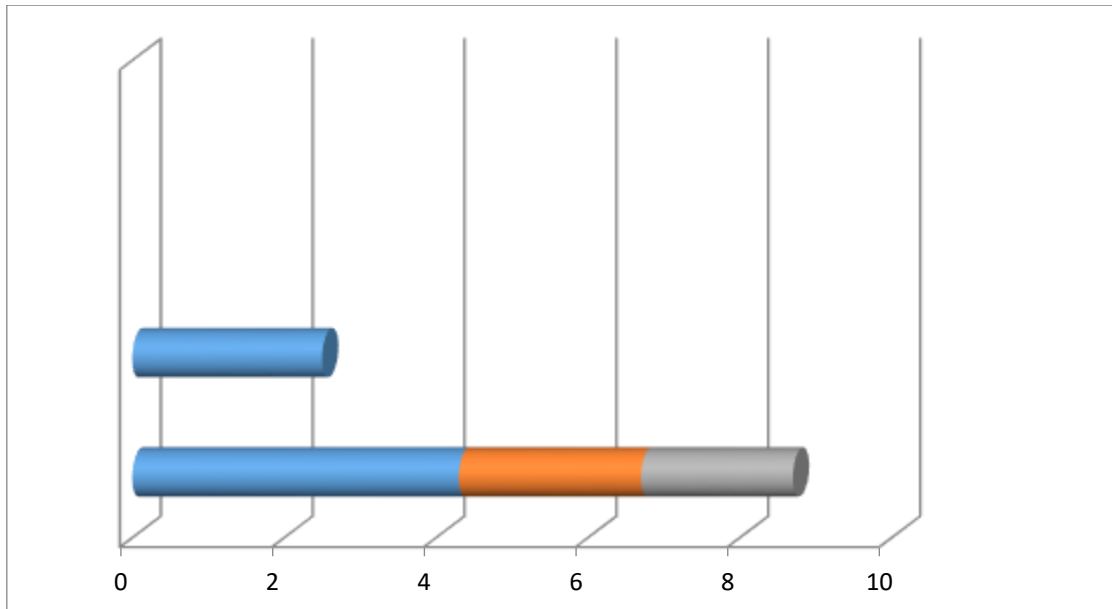
A total of 211 copies of the questionnaires were valid and used for data analysis out of the 218 copies of the questionnaires that was administered, this means that 7 copies of the questionnaires was not valid for the data analysis.

Table 4.1: Faculty of Respondents

Faculty	Frequency	Percentage
Arts	47	22.3
Medicine	6	2.8
Social Sciences	13	6.2
Dentistry	3	1.4
Law	12	5.7
Veterinary	8	3.8
Education	29	13.7
Agriculture	25	11.8
Technology	23	10.9
Science	36	17.1
Public Health	2	0.9
Pharmacy	7	3.3
Total	211	100

Source: Self, 2015

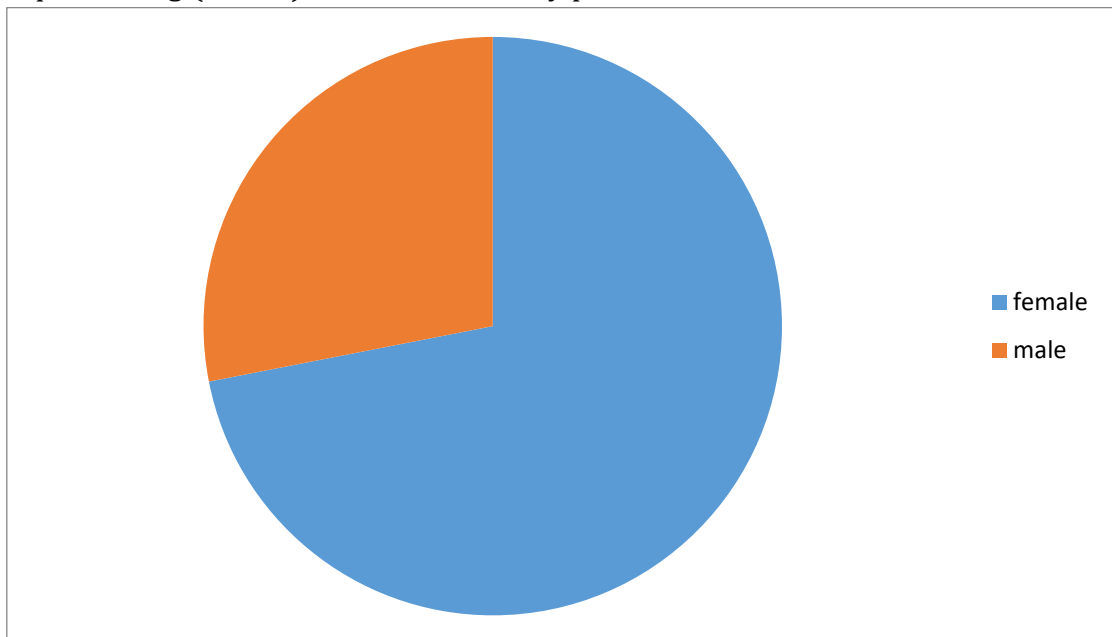
Table 4.1 shows that most of the respondents (47 representing 22.3%) were from the faculty of Arts, while (6 representing 2.8%) were from faculty of Medicine and (13 representing 6.2%) were from the faculty of Social Science, (3 representing 1.4%) were from the faculty of Dentistry, (12 representing 5.7%) were from the faculty of Law, (8 representing 3.8%) were from the faculty of Veterinary, (29 representing 13.7%) were from the faculty of Education, (25 representing 11.8%) were from the faculty of Agriculture, (23 representing 10.9%) were from the faculty of Technology, (36 representing 17.1%) were from the faculty of Science, (2 representing 0.9%) were from the faculty of Public Health, while (7 representing 3.3%) were from the faculty of Pharmacy. Meaning that majority of the students was from the faculty of Arts.



Religion of the respondents in %

Figure 4.1: Religion of the Respondents

Figure 4.1 shows the religion of respondents, the findings shows that 176 (83.4%) of the respondents were Christians, while 35 of the respondents representing (16.6%) indicates that they practiced Islam.



Gender of the respondents

Figure 4.2: Gender of the Respondents

Figure 4.4 shows the gender of respondents. The result indicated that 92 male respondent, representing 43.6%, participated in the study while 119 female respondents, representing 56.4% took part in the study. This indicated that more female than male respondents were part of the study.

Table 4.3 Age Range of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
16-20 years	86	40.8
21-25 years	97	46.0
26-30 years	24	11.3
31-35 years	4	1.9
Total	211	100

Table 4.3 reveals the age range of respondents for the survey (86 representing 40.8%) of the respondents falls within the age of 16-20 years. 97 of the respondents representing 46.0% of the respondents were within the age bracket of 21-25 years, 24 (11.3%) of the respondents fall within the age range of 26-30 years, leaving only 4 respondents (1.9%) who were within the age range of 31-35 years. It naturally show that there are more young students as it can be seen from the age distribution of the respondents using the Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Oyo State.

Table 4.4: Level of Study of the Respondents

Level of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Level 100	61	28.9
Level 200	52	24.6
Level 300	72	34.1
Level 400	18	8.5
Level 500	8	3.8
Total	211	100

Table 4.4 shows that 61 (28.9%) of the respondents were in level 100, while 52 (24.6%) of the respondents were in level 200, 72 (34.1%) of the respondents were in level 300, and 18 (8.5%) of the respondents were in level 400, while only

8 (3.8%) of the respondents were in level 500. This indicates that majority of the students were in level 300 in the study.

Summary of the Major Findings

1. The study has revealed that students need information on current acquisition in the areas of study, location of information material in the library, information on current awareness programs, and information on various users' development programs.
2. Some of the public relations services offered in Kenneth Dike Library include library public information desk, library orientation, library guide/brochure, library displayed reference services, bulletin/notice board and user education.
3. The findings of the study confirmed that public relations practice in Kenneth Dike Library were very effective; students affirmed that public relations practices in the library were effective as they enable them to get the information needed on time.
4. The study discovered that students encountered problems in relation to public relations in the Kenneth Dike Library, most of this challenges hindered full enjoyment of the public relations practices in the library forcing the students to prefer the use of internet service since they believed that the library does not provide a friendly environment to study and to get their information needs.
5. The study suggests and recommend ways to improve awareness and service delivery in Kenneth Dike Library, these included improvements on exhibitions and use of bulletins, enforcing professionalism in the library service delivery, regular dissemination of information acquired, orientation on usefulness of library, publicity and advertisement, improve awareness and service delivery, students also suggest that the library staff should work hand in hand with the library users and that social interaction between staff and users be ensured.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that public relations practice should planned and sustained to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization/institution/firm and the public. It is clear that a public relations division is crucial in any organization including

the library, any activity done in the library either directly or indirectly can be viewed as a public relation activity as long as it appear to promote the public image of the library. It is consequent that for effectiveness of the library, the issue of public relations be taken very serious.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the followings of this study;

1. There should be a more sensitive and reliable system in the library to identify the students' information needs and to satisfy them. This is because students feel reluctant to use the library if it not sensitive to their information needs.
2. The library needs to encourage the use of electronic devices in its public relation programmes and activities. The use of electronic information displays board, traditional mail; media talks, website adverts and social media must be encouraged as these would help transform its public relation activities.
3. Selective method of user orientation should be adopted. By selective method, I mean that users should be divided or grouped either by their faculty or department to fully benefits from the orientation programme. This will help reduced the users dependency level in the library and also, allows them to know where to go in time of need.
4. The study recommended that the library should focus on proper staff training to improve professionalism in the library. Librarians must themselves take initiatives to improve interpersonal relationships with library users. Personal relationships and collaboration (including welcoming publicity in education programs) are a crucial matter towards the development of public relation.
5. It is recommended that library managements should come up with modalities that can engender the reality of restructuring the public relation activities in their libraries, not just in theory but in practice.

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