

## **Public Relations and Pricing on the Utilisation of Information Resources in Academic Libraries in Cross River State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*The study examined the influence of public relations and pricing on the utilization of information resources in academic libraries in Cross River state. Two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Survey research design was used for the study with a population of 362 library staff from six tertiary institutions in Cross River State. A census study was carried out hence the entire population was utilized. Data was analyzed using regression analysis. The findings revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between promotion and rebranding and the utilization of information resources. The study recommended that the management of the library or university should come together and liaise with international organizations, corporate bodies in making board display services, social media platforms with library resources. The management of the library or university should also publize their library services by making awareness of library resources available to users.*

***Keywords:*** *Public Relation, Pricing, Information resources, Utilization, libraries, Librarians*

### **Introduction**

Information is knowledge, and knowledge is power. Every nation's bedrock is information as it aids in the growth and development of the nation. Library staff organize, process, store, and retrieve information whether print or non-print, and users spread it. However, in order to achieve its goal, vision, and philosophy, the library employs techniques in carrying out these functions. Marketing, according to Kotler and Armstrong (2012), is "the process by which library employees create value for users and cultivate strong patron connections; the resources are ordered to collect value from users in return." Marketing library resources and services entails offering the appropriate materials, both print and non-print, as well as raising awareness and creating a favorable environment for using the resources. Because libraries rely on the support of the communities they serve for survival, information professionals must have an understanding of how to effectively advertise their services.

A library should communicate and collaborate with its users and funders to inform them about the library's activities and to enable the library to learn about the community it serves (Adekunmisi, 2013). This can be accomplished through rebranding, promotion as well as through the effective use of information resources and service delivery. This study was conducted against this backdrop to ascertain the implementation of marketing techniques and the exploitation of information resources in the libraries of tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The essence of marketing techniques is to raise patron awareness of new arrivals, how to use them, and where to get them. Libraries acquire new resources through inter-library loan, purchase, exchanges, or gifts and contributions. Despite the importance of marketing techniques, libraries in Cross River State are still at risk of being underutilized by patrons because librarians are not raising awareness, improving promotion, negotiating rates, nor developing effective public relations with patrons. Despite the benefits of library marketing methods, it appears that library resources are prohibitively difficult to access. Staff at the library are less concerned with making a lasting impression on users by providing timely and appropriate service. Some patrons lose interest in visiting the library because library personnel have poor user relationships, and such users have other sources of knowledge, such as the internet, which reduces the library's patronage. Based on the aforementioned, this study investigated the influence of public relations and pricing on information resources utilisation in academic libraries in Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. assess the influence of public relation on the utilisation of information resources in academic libraries in Cross River State, Nigeria
2. assess the influence of pricing on the utilisation of information resources in academic libraries in Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Literature Review**

Public relations are therefore a major practice for promoting the availability and use of information resources and services of the university libraries. Public relations are not different from the promotion of a favorable public image for the library and its services. Rani (2016) investigated the impact of customer value, public relations, perceptions, and brand image on customer loyalty in Pakistan's services sector. Three research questions were posed in the study, which drew a

sample of 367 respondents from two major cities in Pakistan, Lahore and Islamabad. In Pakistan, all respondents used the insurance services of various companies well-structured questionnaire was used. To assess dependability, the Cronbach Alpha test is utilized. To investigate hypothesized associations, multiple regression and correlation coefficients were utilized. According to regression analysis, customer value, public relations, perception, and brand image all results in a 58.0 percent increase in customer loyalty. Customer loyalty and public relations, perceptions have a strong, positive and important relationship.

Wylie (2003) researched on academic library public relations. For the study, two research questions were designed utilizing a purposive sampling technique using a sample of forty-eight (48) state university libraries. A questionnaire was designed. The study's respondents were the directors of the forty-eight academic libraries investigated. According to the data, just 58 percent of the libraries had a public relations program, and only 19 percent of those having a public relation program had a formal public relations plan. Only 30 percent include library usage promotion as part of their program, and only 21 percent compare results to objectives. He advised that all libraries, regardless of size, adopt an urgent public relations campaign with pre-planned, defined, defined objectives, and that public relations should no longer be an optional activity for libraries.

Okeke (2014) conducted research on the public relations abilities of university librarians in Nigeria's Southeast geographical zone. The study's three research questions were posed using simple random sampling on a sample of 13 state university libraries and 174 librarians and library personnel. For data gathering, a questionnaire was used. The collected information was tailed and analyzed using the percentage technique. Their findings suggest that university librarians' public relations abilities are lacking, which has an impact on library management as a whole. They consequently recommended that the university administration conduct inservice training on public relation skills for librarians as soon as possible, and that library schools incorporate public relations courses in their curriculum to develop the leadership styles of future librarians.

In addition, Asemah and ASogwa (2012) conducted research on 'public relations tactics on the administration of Jos North Local Government Area, Plateau State, Nigeria' A sample of one hundred (100) respondents was used to generate three research questions and three hypotheses for the study. The survey research method was used, and a questionnaire was used as a data gathering instrument. There were eight hundred (800) people in the population. The findings revealed that, while the local government makes an effort to inform the public about its policies and activities, the information provided is only on as-needed basis. The findings also revealed widespread unhappiness with public relations techniques in Jos North Local Government Area. Based on their findings, they believe that the Jos North Local Government acknowledges and employs public relations to a limited level. Based on their results and conclusions, they proposed that local

governments in Nigeria develop public relations programs that will act as guides in achieving their goals.

A study on the role of public relations in a non-governmental organization was conducted by James and Peter (2012). A simple random sampling technique was used with a sample of 302 respondents. To generate four research questions and hypotheses for the study. The study relied on descriptive survey research. To acquire data, the researcher used both interviews and questionnaires. The survey used a total of 1,406 registered postgraduate students from the two universities. Personal observation and documentation sources were also employed to acquire data. The information was sorted and evaluated using a frequency count and basic percentages. The findings found that the key issues related with public relations practices in church is ignorance. They suggested allocating adequate finances, training leaders, raising awareness, and reorganizing administrative structures, as well as having a public relations unit separate from the church's public relations unit in each department. By doing so, each arm of the church will draw individuals of the general public to become members. To prevent being veiled in secrecy, the study recommended that churches, regardless of size, should maintain a public relations team to advertise the church's activities through the most frequently utilized acceptable medium.

A pricing strategy for a product or service is a method or approach for deciding the price of a product or service. It covers all of the strategies for calculating the proper pricing, with the goal of retaining demand and profits as high as possible. Kotler (2005) defines "value" as the sum of all the values that consumers exchange for the benefits of owning or utilizing a product or service. The sole aspect of the marketing mix that generates income is price; all other elements present costs. Talwalbeh and Abu-Rumman (2015) investigated the effectiveness of marketing-oriented pricing and product mix pricing techniques. For the study, two research questions and hypotheses were developed utilizing a sample of 616 teachers. The survey method was used in the investigation. The study's population consisted of 1,744 teachers. They were used in the study. For data gathering, a standardized questionnaire was used. Simple linear regression, stepwise regression, and hierarchical tests were used to examine the data. According to the findings, total product mix pricing has a large impact on complementary, bundling, and customer value.

Similarly, Wang and Chen (2016) conducted a study to evaluate the pricing of library products and the marketing of university libraries' electronic resources. The study, which included 338 final-year students and teachers, was directed by three research questions and three hypotheses. For the study, descriptive survey research was used. There were 1845 final year students and lecturers in the population. The data was gathered using a standardized questionnaire. The t-test statistic was used to assess the data. According to the findings of the study, pricing fairness has a considerable beneficial influence on perceived value and purchase intention.

Ishola (2014) investigated the sources of funding for fee-based library and information services for academic library users in selected university libraries in south-western Nigeria. Purposive sampling was used to select a sample size of 320 respondents. The study employed a descriptive survey design. The study's population consisted of nine hundred and twenty (920) university undergraduates. A one-way analysis of variance was used to analyze the data (ANOVA). The study discovered that fee-based library services are available in Nigerian university libraries, and that subsidies and complete cost recovery are frequently used in the delivery of fee-based services to university library customers.

### **Research Methodology**

The study was carried out in academic libraries in Cross River State. The population of the study comprised 362 library staff in six academic libraries in Cross River State as shown in Table 1. The census enumeration technique was employed in this study in which the entire population of 362 library staff was used. The instrument used in this study for data collection was a questionnaire.

**Table 1: Population distribution of library staff in tertiary institutions in Cross River State**

S/N	Tertiary institutions	Male	Female	Total
1	University of Calabar library	134	102	236
2	University of Cross River State library, Calabar	20	29	49
3	Federal College of Education library, Obudu	23	29	52
4	College of Education library, Akamkpa	3	5	8
5	Institute of Management and Technology library, Ugep	1	1	2
6	Collage of Health Technology library, Calabar	9	6	15
	<b>Total</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>362</b>

Source: Offices of the Librarian, 2021.

**Hypotheses**

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

1. Public relation does not significantly influence the utilisation of information resources in academic libraries in cross river state, Nigeria
2. There is no significant influence of pricing on the utilisation of information resources in academic libraries in cross river state, Nigeria

**Presentation and Interpretation of Results**

**Hypothesis 1:** Public relation does not significantly influence the utilisation of information resources in academic libraries in Cross River State, Nigeria

According to this research hypothesis, public relation does not significantly predict the utilisation of information resources. On this hypothesis, promotion was the independent variable, whereas utilization of information resource was the dependent variable. The hypothesis was tested using simple regression statistics, and the findings are shown in public relations in predicting the use of information resources in libraries, which yielded an adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of 0.049. The F-value value of 19.057 derived from the regression table, along with a p value of .000 to 1 and 347 degrees of freedom at the .05 level of significance, indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected. As a result, the findings indicated that public relations had a considerable impact on the use of information resources in libraries.

**Table 2: Summary of data and simple linear regression analysis on the influence of public relation on the utilization of information resources**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	875.915	1	875.915	19.0567	.000
Residual	15949.346	347	45.964		
Total	16825.261	348			
(Constant)	B 17.540	Std. Error .922	Beta	T 19.031	Sig .000
Public relation	.410	.084	.252	4.859	.000

R = .228; R square = .052; Adjusted R Square = .049; Std. Error of the Estimate = 6.77964

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant influence of pricing on the utilisation of information resources in academic libraries in Cross River State, Nigeria

According to this research hypothesis, pricing does not significantly predict the utilization of information resources. The independent variable of the hypothesis was the pricing of library products while the dependent variable was utilization of information resources. Simple regression statistics were used in testing the hypothesis and the results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Summary of data and simple linear regression analysis on the influence of pricing on the utilization of information resources**

<u>Model</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>Df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Regression	1071.976	1	1071.976	23.613	.000
Residual	15753.285	347	46.790		
Total	16825.261	348			
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig
(Constant)	17.080	.929		18.394	.000
<u>Pricing</u>	<u>.391</u>	<u>.080</u>	<u>.252</u>	<u>4.859</u>	<u>.000</u>

R = .252; R square = .064; Adjusted R Square = .061; Std. Error of the Estimate=6.73784

The simple regression analysis in Table 3 on the influence of pricing in predicting the utilization of information resources in the libraries produced and adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of .061 This implied that only 6.1 percent of the variance of utilisation of information resources can be predicted on pricing of library products and services. The F-value of 23.613 of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) obtained from the regression table with a p-value .000 to 1 and 347 degrees of freedom at .05 level of significance showed that the null hypothesis was rejected. The result, therefore implied that there was a significant influence of pricing of library products on the utilization of information resources in the libraries.

## **Discussion of Findings**

### **Public relations and utilisation of information resource**

Findings from the study revealed a substantial positive association between public relations and the use of information resources in tertiary institutions. The study's findings demonstrated that public relations had significant influence on the utilization of information resources. This finding is consistent with Rani (2016)'s research on the impact of customer value, public relations perceptions, and brand image on users. The findings are similarly consistent with those of

Wylie (2003), who conducted research on university libraries and public relations. According to the data, just 58 percent of the libraries had a public relations programme, and only 19 percent of those having a public relations program had a formal public relations plan. Only 30 per cent include library usage promotion as part of their program, and only 21 percent compares results to objectives. The study's findings are similarly consistent with Okeke (2014), who conducted a study on the public relations abilities of university librarians in Nigeria's South East geographical zone. The findings reveal that university librarians' public relations abilities are lacking, which has an overall library administration.

The study's findings are similarly consistent with those of Asemah and Asogwa (2012), who conducted a study on public relations methods in the administration of Jos North Local Government Area, Plateau State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that, while the local government makes an effort to inform the public on its policies and activities, the information provided is only on an as-needed basis. The findings also revealed a broader unhappiness with public relations techniques in Jos North Local Government Area.

### **Pricing and utilisation of information resources**

Findings on the second hypothesis—revealed a significant positive relationship between pricing and information resource utilisation in academic libraries. The study's findings in this area highlighted the influence of pricing on the utilization of information resources. Pricing was proven to have a significant impact on the utilization of information resources. The study's findings are similarly aligned with that of Talwalbeh and Abu-Rumman (2015), who investigated the influence of marketing-oriented pricing and product mix pricing techniques. The findings demonstrated that marketing-oriented pricing has a considerable impact on the overall product mix and pricing, as well as a strong impact on complementary, bundling, and customer value. The study's findings are also consistent with the findings of Ishola (2014), who performed research on the sources of funding for fee-based library and information services for academic library users at selected university libraries in southwest Nigeria. The study discovered that fee-based library services are available in Nigerian university libraries, and that subsidies and complete cost recovery are frequently used in the delivery of fee-based services to university library customers.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the study, it was concluded that the more public relation increases his library awareness and its effectiveness the more likely library resources promotes the public image of the library just as efficient pricing strategies shapes the overall awareness and use of information resources in academic libraries.



## **Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. All the national organizations should come together and liaise with international organizations, corporate bodies, NGO'S, and Tetfund in making Board display services, social media platforms with library resources, information should be expanded sufficiently by that management of the library or university to reflect the available resources to users and this representing all library resources. This will make more users to be aware and make use of information resources in the libraries.
2. The libraries should liaise with the international organizations, non-governmental, Tetfund organization, corporate organizations, private organizations to help them create a good reputation by cultivating relationships with public and encouraging management to make socially responsible decisions for increased utilization of library resources.

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