

# PUBLIC RELATION PRACTICES IN POLYTECHNIC LIBRARIES IN NORTH-CENTRAL, NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

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## Abstract

This study investigated challenges of Public relation practices in Polytechnic libraries in North Central, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions. Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The population of the study was 107 library staff consisting of both Federal and State Polytechnic libraries in North Central, Nigeria. The instrument used to collect data for the study was questionnaire. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The formulated hypotheses were tested using t-test. The findings revealed that inadequacy of funds for organizing film shows and non-availability of funds for organizing social events in the library were identified as challenges, while provision of public information desks for attending to users' enquiries and training of librarians on live streaming techniques for library programmes were identified as strategies for improving PR in the libraries under study. Based on the findings, it was recommended that, parent institution, governing council and Polytechnic management should partner together to provide alternative source of funding the library's public relation activities in order to project the library's image and enhance service delivery, and finally, there should be provision of awareness on the best strategies that can be implemented in Polytechnic libraries to enhance effective service delivery so that the aim of using public relation will not be defeated, among others.

**Keywords:** Public relation, Polytechnic libraries, Service delivery, North Central.

## Introduction

Public relation constitutes a critical function for any organization, particularly for polytechnic libraries operating within the dynamic landscape of North Central, Nigeria, where diverse communities and evolving information needs converge (Oni and Momoh, 2019). The effectiveness of library services hinges not only on the breadth of resources available but also on the ability to communicate their value and relevance to the intended users (Umar and Sokari, 2020). Libraries in this region grapple with unique challenges that stem from a combination of infrastructural limitations, resource constraints, and socio-cultural factors that influence the perception and utilization of library services

A significant impediment arises from inadequate funding, which directly impacts the capacity to procure current and relevant information resources, particularly in specialized fields pertinent to polytechnic education (Simisaye, 2010). Furthermore, the lack of consistent internet connectivity presents a major obstacle in delivering digital resources and participating in global knowledge sharing networks, thereby isolating the libraries from the broader academic community (Baro and Asaba, 2010). The digital divide exacerbates these challenges, as many students and faculty members may lack the necessary digital literacy skills to effectively utilize online resources, thus limiting the reach and impact of the library's digital initiatives. It is also important to note that public libraries in Nigeria face challenges in preserving and conserving local items, including collation and damage (Osuchukwu and Udeze, 2021).

The socio-cultural context of North Central Nigeria introduces another layer of complexity, where traditional modes of communication and information dissemination often take precedence over formal library services. Promoting a culture of reading and research within these communities requires culturally sensitive public relations strategies that can effectively bridge the gap between traditional knowledge systems and modern information resources. In addition, the perception of libraries as mere repositories of books, rather than dynamic learning hubs, further contributes to under-utilization. Consequently, public relation efforts must focus on repositioning libraries as essential centers for lifelong learning, innovation, and community engagement. Overcoming these challenges necessitates a multifaceted approach that encompasses strategic communication, community outreach, and advocacy for increased investment in polytechnic libraries to foster a conducive environment for academic excellence and societal development.

Effective public relation practices are vital for polytechnic libraries in North Central Nigeria to surmount the obstacles that impede their progress and limit their impact. The challenges faced are multifaceted, encompassing infrastructural deficits, resource constraints, socio-cultural dynamics, and perception-related issues, demanding a holistic and adaptive approach to public relation. Therefore, it is important to train librarians in North Central Nigeria and encourage the spirit of innovation for effective library practices. (Anyanwu, 2020)

Effective public relation strategies are crucial for bridging the gap between the library's offerings and the needs and expectations of its diverse user base, fostering a deeper understanding of the library's role in supporting academic success and personal growth. In order to promote the value and impact of polytechnic libraries, public relations initiatives should aim to improve visibility, build relationships, and foster a sense of ownership among students, faculty, and the wider community. Leveraging both traditional and digital channels to disseminate information about library resources, services, and events can help raise awareness and attract new users.

### **Statement of problem**

Effective public relation (PR) practices are essential in polytechnic libraries for fostering positive relationships with users, promoting library services and enhancing institutional visibility. However, many polytechnic libraries in the zone under study struggle to implement strategic PR due to various challenges such as inadequate funding, lack of trained personnel, limited awareness of PR roles, and insufficient communication infrastructure.

These challenges hinder the libraries ability to engage with their communities, adapt to modern information dissemination methods, and meet users' evolving needs. The study seeks to examine the specific challenges faced by polytechnic libraries in North Central, Nigeria, in implementing effective public relation strategies and to explore ways to improve PR practices for better service delivery and user satisfaction.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the challenges to public relation practices in public polytechnic libraries for effective service delivery in North-Central, Nigeria?
2. What are the strategies for improving public relation practices in public polytechnic libraries for effective service delivery in North-Central, Nigeria?

### Hypotheses

The following Null hypotheses are postulated to be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**H01:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of federal and state library staff on the challenges to public relation practices in polytechnic libraries for effective service delivery in North-Central, Nigeria.

**H02:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of federal and state library staff on strategies for improving public relation practices in polytechnic libraries for effective service delivery in North-Central, Nigeria.

### Literature Review

#### *Challenges of Public relation practices in Polytechnic libraries*

The problem of public relation practices is peculiar to the organization operating it, libraries inclusive. A number of these problems have been identified by scholars, foremost among which is Owobu (2011). He identified financial constraint as the major problem of Public relation in this contemporary world.

There is poor financing of the public relation unit in every organization and

institution as a result of the cost cutting policy in the budget of those organizations thereby becoming reluctant to spend the little revenue available on improving their media profile.

Also, there is lack of clearly written public relation programme, absence of Public Relation Officer (PRO) in our libraries, dwindling fortunes of the library's finances occasioned by low budgetary allocation, communication gap between library management and the staff, as well as staff attitude to work which is counterproductive (Bature & Isah, 2013). This is of course true as staff attitude sometimes constitute poor image for the library and thereby inhibit the practice of public relation in libraries.

Another fundamental challenge of public relation in an organization including libraries is the issue of credibility. This is a very significant function of public relation whereby libraries and other agencies try to make the public believe in their organization's credibility. In the twenty-first century, anyone with a web association can easily get a message out in seconds. Undoubtedly, this has brought about a considerable measure of embellishment, bragging and false claims that hurt the validity of promotion that utilize public relation (Fari, 2016). Today with the internet, the instantaneousness of any message is ensured. This benefit can likewise turn out to be a risk in the sense that any message put on the internet cannot be recovered for amendment before its circulation. Once the button is pressed, the message can be seen globally. But with the use of the old media, an editor can be engaged for the postponement of the publication of the concerned article (Haliti, 2019). Libraries and other organization that use the

internet heavily must exercise caution and not being hasty with what is uploaded on the internet.

### **Strategies for improving Public relation practices in Polytechnic libraries**

The success of any library is to get users to use the library. This is achieved by creating awareness and educating users on the benefits of using the library's resources and services through a public relation programme. Below are strategies that could be adopted by Polytechnic libraries in order to improve public relation practices. As stipulated by Nnadozie (2016), the following methods can be adopted as strategies for enhancing public relation practices in Polytechnic libraries, integrated readers' services, library displays and exhibitions, library week, use of notice boards, directional guides, film shows, book talks, library publications, story hours, and so on.

To effectively improve library's image, librarians should provide quite environment for reading and study. Westwood (2011) noted that it is very necessary more than ever before, for librarians to provide quite study spaces which should serve as a retreat from noise and bluster from the voices of the commercial world. The author noted further that sometimes the greatest leisure one can enjoy is to enjoy silence for a while.

Application of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) in Public relation for effective information service delivery is another strategy. The advent of ICT has ushered in new dimensions and challenges in library and information services delivery in polytechnic libraries. Today, many of the major information services that are provided manually are now available and accessible on the internet. Interestingly, library users can now search different

databases, both online and offline on CDs as well as library catalogues of other academic libraries all over the world.

Libraries should promote the use of information technology as an integral part of library services by using e-mail facility as public relation strategy for information service delivery in the library (Natarajan, 2012). He stated further that the benefit of using email to communicate with customers include building relationships and developing brand loyalty by informing users of new products and services, seminars, events, conducting marketing research by analysing users messages, creating and maintaining one-to-one relationships with customers. Similarly, it should be noted that library services and products can be marketed on the library website by using library web pages as portals extend their reach to the global community.

There are other strategies for building strong and effective public relation in polytechnic libraries in Nigeria. These according to Adewusi (2015) include: making libraries available to users through the various sections of the library in order to assist students when they seek help or obviously need it, distributing library handbook or guide to the library and its resources to users and general public, organizing exhibitions, book sales and other special events, displays of inexpensive books which students may buy, manifestation of friendly interest in various departments of the polytechnic can stimulate or revive a colleague's interest in services offered by the library, among others.

For polytechnic libraries to practice public relation effectively and have the desired acceptance from the general public, Bature and Isah (2013) opined that these libraries should carry out users' studies before attempting to ascertain

the type of public relation programme that will produce the desired result. Also, a collective approach should be adopted whereby member of staff and governing bodies act as a part-time PRO for the library and then work closely with the Polytechnic librarian. There should be a feedback mechanism from the public such as a suggestion box, provision of email addresses, use of social media like face book and twitter, now X.

Haruna, Madu and Awurdi (2018) conducted a study on Nigerian public libraries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: overcoming challenges through public relation and publicity activities. The aim of the study was to understand the types of public relation strategies employed by the library to attract potential users and retain old clients. The study employed none probability sampling technique in a survey of 132 users and 10 staff of the Borno state public library, Maiduguri. A total of 149 questionnaires were retrieved after completion, where 17 copies were rejected for wrong entries and in-completeness. The 132 valid copies and 10 staff questionnaires were subjected to descriptive statistics to determine the nature and level of public relation engaged by the library as well as factors that hinder library use. The study is similar to the current one because they both focused on public relation in the library. They both use questionnaire as a data collection instrument (quantitative). They differ in the research design and location. The previous used case study and was conducted in Maiduguri in North East, whereas the current was conducted in six states in North Central, Nigeria.

Gezihagne (2018) also conducted a study to assess the practice and challenges of Public relation in government universities in Ethiopia. The purposes of the study were to examine Stakeholders' perception towards Public

relation, assess the Public relation offices of the selected universities to reach the public in image building and to identify the challenges which inhibit the practice of public relation in universities. Mixed research approach was adopted. The researcher used questionnaire as a data gathering tool from the above subjects. Accordingly, from thirty-five first, second and third generation government universities in the country, thirteen universities were selected purposively as the researcher noticed these peculiar problems of public relation practices are manifested.

The findings of the study revealed that professional Public relation practice in the given 13 government universities are in difficult condition as the office is not professionally and structurally organized despite its key role is well recognized. The study like the one reviewed above is related to the current study in its methodology and instrument for data collection. However, they differ because the previous was conducted in public universities in Ethiopia, whereas the current was conducted in public Polytechnics in North Central, Nigeria.

Musa (2016) carried out a study to investigate Public relation strategies for information service provision in North Western States of Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to identify the strategies used in promoting library image among the customers in Federal University libraries in North Western States of Nigeria on one hand, and to find out the public relation techniques employed by the library staff in the libraries under study on the other hand. Survey research design was adopted for the study and a total number of one hundred and forty-six (146) library staff from the relevant division of the four selected federal university libraries' reference division, serial, customers service

and ICT were drawn as population and used as sample size for the study. Questionnaire was used to collect data for the study and the data collected were presented and analyzed using frequency distribution tables, percentages, and histograms. The study like the one reviewed earlier is also related to this, in methodology and instrument for data collection. However, they differ because the previous was conducted in four states in North West, whereas the current was conducted in six states in North Central, Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

Descriptive survey design was used for this study. The basic premise of this methodology is that it permits the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data collection within a single investigation. The target population for the study was 107 consisting of all librarians in the six (6) Federal and State Polytechnic Libraries in North Central States of Nigeria. The libraries are: Federal Polytechnic Library, Idah, Kogi State (17), Federal Polytechnic Library, Nasarawa, Nasarawa State (21), Federal Polytechnic Library, Offa, Kwara State (16), Federal Polytechnic Library, Bida, Niger State (17), Benue State Polytechnic library, Ugbokolo, Benue State (16) and Plateau State Polytechnic library, Barkin Ladi, Plateau State (20).

There was no sampling as all the population of the study was used as sample. This is because, the population was small and manageable. The research instrument that was used for data collection was questionnaire. The researcher administered the copies of the questionnaire personally with the help of three research assistants who were mainly library staff of the respective libraries under study.

The data collected for this research through questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while t-test was used to test all the formulated hypotheses of the study. Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for computation of the results. Decision rule was used to reject the null hypotheses when  $P < 0.05$  and to accept the alternative hypothesis where necessary.

The real limits of numbers were used in taking decisions on the research questions to determine the extent of agreement and disagreement by a respondent and establish decision rule such that where the response mode was HU/ HE/, the real limit of number would be 3.50 – 4.00. Also, where the response mode was U/E/, the real limit of number would be 2.50 – 3.49. Where the response mode was LU/LE/, the real limit number would also be 1.50 – 2.49. Finally, where the response mode was NU/NE/, the real limit of number would be 0.50 – 1.49.

## Results and Discussion

This section presents the data analysis result in Tables in line with the research questions, and hypotheses that guided the study.

**Research Questions 1:** What are the challenges to public relation practices in polytechnic libraries for effective service deliver in North-Central, Nigeria?

**Table 1:**

***Mean and Standard Deviation on challenges to Public relation practices in Polytechnic libraries for effective service delivery***

	Federal Polytechnic		State Polytechnic		Total		Rank	Dec
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1 Inadequacy of funds for organising film shows	3.16	0.85	3.66	0.48	3.41	0.77	1 <sup>st</sup>	A
2 Non-availability of live-streaming skills	3.17	0.83	3.51	0.51	3.34	0.75	2 <sup>nd</sup>	A

3 Non-availability of graphic design facilities	3.37	0.87	3.14	0.60	3.25	0.79	6 <sup>th</sup>	A
4 Non-availability of students' library notice board (electronic and manual)	3.22	0.83	3.40	0.50	3.31	0.73	3 <sup>rd</sup>	A
5 Irregularity of library exhibitions activities	3.17	0.94	3.40	0.50	3.28	0.82	4 <sup>th</sup>	A
6 Non-availability of suggestion boxes to collect users' opinion	3.24	0.89	3.29	0.46	3.26	0.76	5 <sup>th</sup>	A
7 Inadequacy of funds for library publications	3.17	1.04	3.40	0.50	3.28	0.89	4 <sup>th</sup>	A
8 Inadequacy of integrated readers' services	3.14	0.86	3.26	0.44	3.20	0.74	7 <sup>th</sup>	A
9 Inability to secure space to present and discuss library issues in national dailies	3.25	0.84	3.03	0.51	3.14	0.75	11 <sup>th</sup>	A
10 Non-availability of public information desks for attending to users' enquiries	3.16	0.77	3.11	0.32	3.13	0.64	12 <sup>th</sup>	A
11 Inadequacy of funds for organising book talks	2.94	0.91	3.40	0.50	3.17	0.82	9 <sup>th</sup>	A
12 Non-availability of digital literacy skills	3.14	0.74	3.00	0.00	3.07	0.59	14 <sup>th</sup>	A
13 Low level of Publicity skills by librarians	3.05	0.94	3.14	0.36	3.09	0.78	13 <sup>th</sup>	A
14 Inadequacy of funds for organizing social events in the library	2.90	0.82	3.40	0.50	3.15	0.76	10 <sup>th</sup>	A
15 Inadequacy of signage facilities	2.98	1.06	3.14	0.36	3.06	0.87	15 <sup>th</sup>	A
16 Inadequacy of funds for organizing library week	2.84	0.77	3.40	0.50	3.13	0.73	12 <sup>th</sup>	A
17 Non-availability of staff notice board (electronic and manual)	2.86	0.84	3.29	0.46	3.07	0.75	14 <sup>th</sup>	A
18 Library manager's attitudes towards library publicity activities	3.00	0.97	2.91	0.78	2.95	0.90	16 <sup>th</sup>	A
19 Non-availability of Polytechnic web managers to place library news and issues on the polytechnic website	3.03	0.92	2.77	0.65	2.90	0.84	17 <sup>th</sup>	A
<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>3.16</b>	<b>0.77</b>		

*SD= Standard Deviation, Dec= Decision, A= Agree*

Table 1 shows the result of the challenges to public relation practices in polytechnic libraries for effective service delivery in North-Central, Nigeria. It shows that the mean scores range from 3.41 - 2.90 and the cluster mean is 3.16 ±.77, which suggests that the identified challenges are rated agree. These challenges include inadequacy of funds for organizing film shows, non-availability of funds for organizing social events in the library, non-availability of students' library notice board, non-availability of graphic design facilities, the inadequacy of funds for library publications, irregularities of library exhibitions activities, non-availability of suggestion boxes to collect users' opinion. The

standard deviation scores range from .90 - .59, suggesting a high dispersion rate in the responses of the polytechnics' library staff.

**H01:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of federal and state library staff on the challenges to public relation practices in polytechnic libraries for effective service delivery in North-Central, Nigeria.

**Table 2:**

*t-test on Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of federal and state staff on challenges to Public relation practices in Polytechnic libraries for effective service delivery*

Polytechnic Categories	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Df	T	Sig	Dec
Federal Polytechnic	71	3.0954	0.66475	96	-1.286	0.202	Accepted
State Polytechnic	36	3.2451	0.23703	85.463	-1.613		

*Std Dev = Standard Deviation, Df = Degree of Freedom, t = test score, Sig = Significant Level, Dec = Decision*

Table 2 shows that the obtained significant level is 0.202. Since 0.202 is greater than 0.05 set for the study, the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, it can be inferred that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of federal and state polytechnic libraries on the challenges to public relation practices for effective service delivery in Polytechnic libraries. This implies that the federal and state Polytechnic libraries are facing similar challenges to public relation practices.

The result of the analysed data as revealed in table one shows the various factors that inhibit effective public relation practices in polytechnic libraries.

These factors include inadequacy of funds for organizing film shows and library publications, non-availability of funds for organizing social events in the library, and library manager's attitude toward public relation, among others. This is consistent with the findings of Owobu (2011) which pointed out that the major challenge of effective public relation practices in libraries is that of financial constraint.

Also, the findings of Bature and Isah (2013) identified a number of challenges to effective public relation in libraries which range from lack of clearly written public relations programme, absence of Public Relation Officer (PRO) in libraries, dwindling fortunes of the library's finances occasioned by low budgetary allocation, communication gap between library management and the staff, as well as staff attitude to work which is counterproductive. However, one would have expected some level of differences in the facilities used because it is assumed that Federal polytechnic receive more funding than its State counterpart. But, these findings are not surprising knowing that both institutions operate in the same context.

**Research Questions 2:** What are the strategies for improving public relation practices in Polytechnic libraries for effective service delivery in North-Central, Nigeria?

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on strategies for improving Public relation practices in Polytechnic libraries for effective service delivery**

		Federal Polytechnic		State Polytechnic		Total		Rank	Dec
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
20	Provision of public information desks for attending to users' enquiries	3.51	0.67	3.26	0.44	3.38	0.61	1 <sup>st</sup>	A
21	Training of librarians on live streaming techniques for library programmes	3.37	0.83	3.40	0.50	3.38	0.73	1 <sup>st</sup>	A

22	Provision of visual display facilities such as projectors, televisions, etc in the library	3.37	0.87	3.26	0.44	3.31	0.74	3 <sup>rd</sup>	A
23	Provision of suggestion boxes to collect users' opinion	3.35	0.83	3.23	0.69	3.29	0.78	4 <sup>th</sup>	A
24	Provision of adequate directional facilities	3.13	0.92	3.51	0.51	3.32	0.82	2 <sup>nd</sup>	A
25	Lobbying for consistent airtime with television stations for library programmes	3.24	0.93	3.23	0.69	3.23	0.85	8 <sup>th</sup>	A
26	Provision of staff notice board (electronic and manual) for information update	3.30	0.82	3.11	0.63	3.20	0.76	9 <sup>th</sup>	A
27	Creating integrated readers' services	3.30	0.96	3.11	0.32	3.20	0.80	9 <sup>th</sup>	A
28	Organising publicity training programmes for the library staff	3.13	0.92	3.40	0.50	3.26	0.81	5 <sup>th</sup>	A
29	Availability of public information desks for attending to users' enquiries	3.29	0.96	3.11	0.32	3.20	0.79	9 <sup>th</sup>	A
30	Orientation of library managers on the benefits of publicity to the library image	3.13	0.92	3.37	0.49	3.25	0.80	6 <sup>th</sup>	A
31	Soliciting for preferences to library news on the university website	3.11	1.09	3.37	0.49	3.24	0.93	7 <sup>th</sup>	A
32	Training of librarians in graphic design	3.02	1.02	3.51	0.51	3.26	0.90	5 <sup>th</sup>	A
33	Fund provision for the production of publicity materials like flyers, posters, banners, etc	3.06	0.88	3.40	0.50	3.23	0.78	8 <sup>th</sup>	A
34	Employing publicity-skilled experts in the library	3.14	1.13	3.26	0.44	3.20	0.95	9 <sup>th</sup>	A
35	Provision of users' notice board (electronic and manual) for information update	3.10	0.96	3.26	0.44	3.18	0.82	10 <sup>th</sup>	A
36	Ensuring that library programmes are presented in print or mass media	3.16	0.92	3.11	0.63	3.13	0.83	12 <sup>th</sup>	A
37	Lobbying for consistent airtime with radio stations for library programmes	3.06	1.01	3.23	0.69	3.14	0.91	11 <sup>th</sup>	A
38	Allocation of funds for organising film shows	3.14	0.97	3.09	0.61	3.11	0.85	13 <sup>th</sup>	A
39	Allocation of funds for organising book talks	3.13	1.09	3.09	0.61	3.11	0.94	13 <sup>th</sup>	A
40	Maintaining consistency in library exhibitions activities	3.08	0.81	3.11	0.63	3.09	0.75	14 <sup>th</sup>	A
41	Paying for columns for library issues in national dailies	3.06	0.97	3.11	0.63	3.08	0.86	15 <sup>th</sup>	A
42	Allocation inadequacy of funds for organizing library week	3.11	1.14	2.97	0.51	3.04	0.96	16 <sup>th</sup>	A
43	Attracting and encouraging volunteers through incentives	3.08	0.99	2.97	0.51	3.02	0.85	17 <sup>th</sup>	A
44	Allocation of funds for library publications	2.89	1.02	3.09	0.61	2.99	0.90	18 <sup>th</sup>	A
45	Allocation of funds for organizing social events	2.92	1.11	2.97	0.51	2.94	0.94	19 <sup>st</sup>	A
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>3.16</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>3.21</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>3.18</b>	<b>0.83</b>		

*SD= Standard Deviation, Dec= Decision, A= Agree*

Table 3 shows the result of the strategies for improving public relation practices in Polytechnic libraries for effective service delivery in North-Central, Nigeria. It shows that the mean scores range from 3.38 - 2.94 and the cluster mean score is 3.18 ±.83, indicating that the identified strategies for improving public relations practices were all rated as agreed. The agreed strategies include the provision of public information desks for attending to users' enquiries,

training of librarians on live streaming techniques for library programmes, provision of visual display facilities such as projectors, provision of suggestion boxes to collect users' opinions, provision of adequate directional facilities, lobbying for consistent airtime with radio stations for library programmes, organizing publicity training programmes for the library staff among others. The standard deviation scores range from .96 - .61, suggesting a high dispersion rate in the responses of the polytechnics' library staff.

**H02:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of federal and state library staff on strategies for improving public relation practices in polytechnic libraries for effective service delivery in North-Central, Nigeria.

**Table 4:**

*t.test on Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of federal and staff on the strategies for improving Public relation practices in Polytechnic libraries for effective service delivery*

Polytechnic Categories	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Df	T	Sig	Dec
Federal Polytechnic	71	3.1603	0.68629	96	-.406	0.686	Accepted
State Polytechnic	36	3.2120	0.41454	95.257	-.464		

*Std Dev = Standard Deviation, Df = Degree of Freedom, t = test score, Sig = Significant Level, Dec = Decision*

Table 4 shows that the obtained significant level is 0.686. Since 0.686 is greater than 0.05 set for the study, the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, it can be inferred that state and federal library staff do not differ significantly on the strategies for improving public relation practices in Polytechnic libraries for

effective service delivery. This finding suggests that the strategies for improving public relation practices that are obtainable in the Federal Polytechnic libraries are applicable in the State Polytechnic libraries.

The findings presented in table three shows that the identified strategies for improving public relation practices include the provision of public information desks for attending to users' enquiries, training of librarians on live streaming techniques for library programmes, and provision of visual display facilities, among others. This is in line with the view of Natarajan (2012) who suggests that libraries should promote the use of information technology as an integral part of library services by using e-mail facility as public relation strategy for information service delivery in the library. He added that the benefit of using email to communicate with customers include building relationships and developing brand loyalty by informing users of new products and services, seminars, events, conducting marketing research by analysing user's messages, and creating and maintaining one-to-one relationships with customers.

Similarly, the findings of Adewusi (2015) identified some strategies for building strong and effective public relation in polytechnic libraries in Nigeria. These include: making libraries available to users through the various sections of the library in order to assist students when they seek help or obviously need it, distributing library handbook or guide to the library and its resources to users and general public, organizing exhibitions, book sales and other special events, displays of inexpensive books which students may buy, manifestation of friendly interest in various departments of the polytechnic can stimulate or revive a user interest in services offered by the library. Technically, the current findings relate

to the above study such that it underscores the place of exhibition, social events and providing adequate guidance or direction in improving public relation activity.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1 The parent institution, governing council and Polytechnic management should collaborate and partner together to provide alternative source of funding the library's public relation activities/programmes in order to project the library's image and enhance effective service delivery. This could be by way of establishing and equipping the reprographic section within the library premises that can compete favourably with other business outfits nearby. where a certain percentage of the polytechnic internally generated revenue could be set aside for the libraries public relation activities.
- 2 It is also absolutely necessary to provide awareness on the best strategies that can be implemented in polytechnic libraries to enhance effective service delivery so that the aim of using public relation will not be defeated. Librarians are trained information professionals and not public relation experts. Therefore, opportunities should be given for more training so as to be well-versed in the concept, practices and execution of public relation campaigns and marketing of library services.
- 3 Polytechnic libraries in North central, Nigeria should transition from improvised publicity to a formal hybrid PR strategy. This involves integrating traditional advocacy such as radio, print, and physical bulletin

boards, with advanced digital engagement as a way of bridging digital divide in user perception.

- 4 To overcome the challenge of limited funding also, Polytechnic libraries in the North Central Zone should form a Regional PR Consortium. This means that a centralized digital repository or a shared North Central Polytechnic library newsletter should be created to pool resources, share success stories and reduce the cost of individual campaign materials.

### Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate Public relation practices in Polytechnic libraries in North Central, Nigeria: challenges and enhancement strategies. The study has two research objectives. The design of the study was descriptive survey research design. Questionnaire was used for data gathering. The population of the study was one hundred and seven (107) librarians comprising from six polytechnics in north central Nigeria. The entire population was used as sample size because the population was small and manageable.

This study has no doubt met the purpose for which it was embarked upon such that the findings made, if properly applied, can improve the unsatisfactory situation that gave rise to the problem. The study concludes that public relation practices in polytechnic libraries in North Central, Nigeria are heavily challenged.

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