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Techniques for Implementing School Public Relations Programmes for Technical Vocational Education and Training in Rivers State Universities

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Abstract

The study examined techniques for implementing school public relations programmes for technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities. Three research questions were answered, and corresponding null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study was 34 lecturers from Rivers State Universities. There was no sampling due to small population size. Data were collected through a self-structured questionnaire designed in the patterned of 4-point rating scale of agreement. A reliability coefficient of 0.83 was established through test retest method. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that hiring of human resources, use of audience targeting and use of social media marketing enhances the implementation of school public relation programmes in TVET in Rivers State Universities.

Keywords: School, Public, Relations, Programmes, Technical, Vocational, Education, Training.

Introduction

The success of any organization, especially the institutions of higher learning even departments or units or faculty, depends on how information is handled in that organization. The efficiency and effectiveness with which information is managed determines to a large extent whether the institution will consistently be crisis ridden or not. Therefore, no institution or department of

higher learning can survive without the activities of the public relations department. Yet, many departments within have failed to carry out public relations including TVET to enhance programmes.

The current reform of technical vocational education and training (TVET) system in Nigeria seems to have not fully addressed the impediments to technology education development in the country till date. There is therefore the need to further intensify efforts geared towards repositioning (TVET) institutions with a view to making them attractive to prospective students. In attempt to position TVET, certain strategies need to be in place such as organizing regular excursion for TVET students, recognizing/rewarding outstanding student achievement through awards, commendation and introducing public relations activities into the school curriculum. This will create the awareness of TVET to the public.

Public relations in the context of educational process are defined as a planned and systematic management function to help improve the programmes and services of an education system (Okwelle, 2010). In the same vein, Greg (2012) described school public relations as a management function that establishes and maintains two-way mutual relationships and communication between the school and the community. A careful look at the above definitions shows that school public relations relies on a comprehensive two-way communication process involving both internal publics (students and staff) and external public (parents, government and general public) with a common goal of stimulating a better understanding of the roles, objectives, accomplishments and needs of the school. The purpose of a school public relations programme according to Gorton (as cited by Ibeneme & Okwelle, 2008) includes:

- a. Selling the educational programme to the people of the community so that they will take pride in and support the schools

b. Interpreting to the people of the community the educational programme that is in operation so that the people will have a better understanding of what the school are doing and will support the school programme

c. Encourage the community interest and participation in the school programme.

The above are purpose of school public relation through which technical vocational education and training can be achieved. Technical vocational education and training (TVET) implies life-long learning and preparation for responsible citizenship (Okwelle & Okeke, 2016). This form of education is perceived as one of the crucial elements in enhancing economic productivity (Abudulahi, 2014). TVET is regarded as an integral part of education that provides a means of preparing individuals for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work (Okwelle, 2010). In this new economic environment as observed in most developed countries in the world today, TVET is expected to produce and supply intermediate craftsmen, technicians, semi-skilled and skilled manpower that will be capable to function very well in all sectors in the industry critical to national development, Okeke (as cited in Okwelle, 2010), Okolocha (2006) noted that since the introduction of TVET in Nigeria education system some years ago, enrolment in TVET programme in Nigeria has remain low. This development according to Agwi & Puyate (2017) is more disturbing and could be improved through an effective public relation or its agents within the department.

Statement of Problem

The current reform of technical vocational education and training (TVET) system in Nigeria seems to have not fully addressed the impediments to technology education development in the country till date. There is therefore the need to further intensity efforts geared towards repositioning (TVET) institutions with a view to making them attractive to prospective students. Since TVET programmes provide beneficiaries with skills for many job opportunities, students'

skills in the programme can be involved in the school public relations activities for the purpose of educating the community as to what the programme does and how it will benefit graduates. This type of campaign as stressed by Abdulahi (2016), may result in greater public awareness and acceptance as well as in increased enrolments into TVET programmes. Evidence (Ibeneme & Okwelle, 2008) showed that there is no proper organized public relations programme in Nigeria TVET institutions. It is based on these that the study to examine techniques for implementing school public relations programmes for technical Vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine techniques for implementing school public relations programmes for technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Find out how hiring human resources enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities.
2. Examine how the use of audience targeting enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities.
3. Ascertain how the use of social media marketing enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities.

Research Questions

The following questions were answered to guide the study.

1. How does hiring human resources enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities?
2. How does the use of audience targeting enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities?
3. How does the use of social media marketing enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of lecturers from Rivers State University (RSU) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) on how hiring human resources enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of lecturers from Rivers State University (RSU) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) on how the use of audience targeting enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of lecturers from Rivers State University (RSU) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) on how the use of social media marketing enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Rivers State. The population of the study comprised of all the lecturers in the Department of Technical and Vocational Education in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

As at the time of this study, there were 34 lecturers in Technical Vocational Education in Rivers State Universities (RSU = 12; IAUE = 22) (Departmental Handbook, 2020). Due to small population size of the study, the entire population was used for the study. Hence, there was no sample and sampling technique. The instrument for the study was a self-structured questionnaire titled “Techniques for Implementing School Public Relations Programmes (TISPRP)”. The questionnaire was structured in the pattern of 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA-), Agree (A-3), Disagree (D-2) and Strongly Disagreed (SD-1). The instrument was face validated by two experts in the Department of Vocational and Technology Education in Rivers State University, Port-Harcourt. The reliability of the instrument was established using test-retest method. Copies of the instrument were administered to 8 lecturers in Technical Education from Federal College of Education, Technical (FCET), Omoku through simple random sampling technique. The data obtained from these respondents were used to compute the reliability. The coefficient value obtained was 0.83 which was used to judge the reliability of the instrument and was considered high enough for the study. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Mean values less than 2.50 were disagree, while Mean values equal or greater than 2.50 were agree. The data was analyzed with SPSS 13 version.

Result

Research Question 1

How does hiring human resources enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities?

Table 1: Mean Responses on How Hiring Human Resources Enhances Implementation of School Public Relations

S/N	Item	RSU Lecturers			IAUE Lecturers		
		X ₁	SD ₁	RMK	X ₂	SD ₂	RMK
1	Advising the department on PR issues.	3.11	1.01	Agree	3.09	0.73	Agree
2	It serves as a contact point to the society.	2.96	0.86	Agree	3.25	0.60	Agree
3	Help in disseminate plan information through selected media.	3.08	0.71	Agree	2.56	1.03	Agree
4	Identifying and addressing issues of public concern that affect the organization.	3.55	1.11	Agree	3.70	0.80	Agree
5	Relating TVET with other firms and industries.	3.02	1.03	Agree	3.14	0.66	Agree
6	Stimulating an interest in a person, product, or organization towards TVET.	3.33	0.89	Agree	2.97	0.70	Agree
7	Developing effective policy to achieve TVET public expectations.	2.94	0.54	Agree	3.11	1.11	Agree
Average Mean/SD		3.14	0.88	Agree	3.12	0.80	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 1 shows lecturer's response on how the use of hiring human resources enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities. Based on the mean responses obtained, lecturers agree that all the listed items on hiring human resources are used to enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities. These mean values were agreed since they were equal or more than 2.50 which is the acceptable mean.

Research Question 2

How the use of audience targeting does enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities?

Table 2: Mean Responses on How the Use of Audience Targeting Enhances Implementation of School Public Relations

S/N	Audience Enhances Through:	Targeting		Instructors			Beneficiary		
		TVET	PR	X ₁	SD ₁	RMK	X ₂	SD ₂	RMK
1	Conference participation.			3.56	0.70	Agree	3.05	0.87	Agree
2	Attending workshop.			3.40	0.61	Agree	3.11	0.71	Agree
3	Meeting individual persons			3.02	1.02	Agree	2.86	0.91	Agree
4	Television broadcast			2.89	1.13	Agree	2.70	1.11	Agree
5	Radio advertisement			2.73	0.74	Agree	3.04	0.80	Agree
6	The use of flyers			3.64	0.96	Agree	3.44	0.70	Agree
7	The use of billboard			3.11	0.75	Agree	3.60	0.67	Agree
8	Public notice board			2.83	0.58	Agree	3.20	1.03	Agree
	Average Mean/SD			3.15	0.81	Agree	3.13	0.85	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 2 shows lecturer's response on how the use of audience targeting enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities. Based on the mean responses obtained, lecturers agree that all the listed items on audience targeting are used to enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities. These mean values were agreed since they were equal or more than 2.50 which is the acceptable mean.

Research Question 3

How does the use of social media marketing enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities?

Table 3: Mean Responses on How the Use of Social Media Marketing Enhances Implementation of School Public Relations

S/N	Item	Instructors			Beneficiary		
		X ₁	SD ₁	RMK	X ₂	SD ₂	RMK
1	It is used to advertise the image of TVET.	3.61	0.60	Agree	2.80	0.83	Agree
2	TVET materials can get to the public through media.	3.01	0.88	Agree	3.14	0.75	Agree
3	It enhances effective TVET service delivery.	3.73	1.01	Agree	3.09	0.69	Agree
4	It makes TVET materials easy accessible by the public.	2.66	0.94	Agree	3.11	1.11	Agree
5	TVET publications are make publicized on social media.	2.87	0.84	Agree	3.41	0.70	Agree
Average Mean/SD		3.18	0.85	Agree	3.11	0.82	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 3 shows lecturer's response on how the use of social media marketing enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities. Based on the mean responses obtained, lecturers agree that all the listed items on social media marketing are used to enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities. These mean values were agreed since they were equal or more than 2.50 which is the acceptable mean.

Test of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of lecturers from Rivers State University (RSU) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) on how hiring human resources enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities.

Table 4: z-Test Analysis on How Hiring Human Resources Enhances TVET Public Relation

Category	\bar{X}	SD	N	df	α	zcal	zcrit	Remark
RSU	3.14	0.88	12	32	0.05	1.06	1.96	Accepted
IAUE	3.12	0.80	22					

Source: *Researcher's Field Result; 2020* Accept Ho if $z_{cal} \leq z_{crit}$, Otherwise Reject Ho.

According to table 4, the calculated value of z ($z_{cal} = 1.06$) is less than the critical value of z ($z_{crit} = 1.960$) at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of lecturers from Rivers State University (RSU) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) on how hiring human resources enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities.

2. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of lecturers from Rivers State University (RSU) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) on how the use of audience targeting enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities.

Table 5: z-Test Analysis on How Use of Audience Enhances TVET Public Relation

Category	\bar{X}	SD	N	df	α	zcal	zcrit	Remark
RSU	3.15	0.81	12	32	0.05	1.18	1.96	Accepted
IAUE	3.13	0.85	22					

Source: *Researcher's Field Result; 2020* Accept Ho if $z_{cal} \leq z_{crit}$, Otherwise Reject Ho.

Since the calculated value of z ($z_{cal} = 1.18$) is less than the critical value of z ($z_{crit} = 1.960$) at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of lecturers from Rivers State University (RSU) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) on how use of audience enhances implementing

school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities.

3. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of lecturers from Rivers State University (RSU) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) on how the use of social media marketing enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities.

Table 6: z-Test Analysis on How Use of Social Media Enhances TVET Public Relation

Category	\bar{X}	SD	N	df	α	zcal	zcrit	Remark
RSU	3.18	0.85	12	32	0.05	1.02	1.96	Accepted
IAUE	3.11	0.82	22					

Source: *Researcher's Field Result; 2020* Accept Ho if $z_{cal} \leq z_{crit}$, Otherwise Reject Ho.

Since the calculated value of z ($z_{cal} = 1.02$) is less than the critical value of z ($z_{crit} = 1.960$) at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of lecturers from Rivers State University (RSU) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) on how use of social media enhances implementing school public relations programmes in technical vocational education and training in Rivers State Universities.

Discussion of Findings

Result from Table 4.1 shows hiring of human resources enhances the implementation of school public relation programmes in TVET in the following way; advising the department on PR issues, identifying and addressing issues of public concern that affect the organization among others. This finding is in line with Ojomo (2006) who found that public relation can be effective with the utilization of personnel.

Result from Table 4.2 shows that audience targeting enhances the implementation of school public relation programmes in TVET. The finding of the study shows that conference participation, attending workshop, meeting individual persons, television broadcast, radio advertisement, the use of flyers, the use of billboard and the public notice board among others. Result from Table 4.3 shows social media enhances the implementation of school public relation programmes in TVET. The finding of the study shows that TVET materials can get to the public through media, it makes TVET materials easily accessible by the public, it enhances effective TVET service delivery, TVET publications are make publicized on social media. These findings are in line with Macian Hoff (2014) who found that social media enhance public relations of TVET programmes when students use networks to connect interact.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was deduced that technical vocational education and training can be implemented through public relation. This can be achieved through social media, audience targeting and hiring of human resources.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations were made.

1. TVET departments in Rivers State Universities should employ the service of other human resources. By this, the image of the department could be projected outside through public relation.
2. Through conference and workshop attendance by members and TVET lecturers, public relation could be enhanced in this process.

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