



New Media Use by Public Relations Practitioners in the Rivers State University and University of Port Harcourt: A Comparative Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study is targeted at comparatively analyze the use of new media by public relations practitioners in the University of Port Harcourt and the Rivers State University respectively. To explicitly achieve this, related studies in relevant areas were reviewed, with the aid of up-dated literal materials which were gathered to lay emphasis on the strong reasons why new media should be emphatically incorporated, in the day to day routine duties of the public relations practitioner. Simultaneously, establishing gratification, efficiency, innovativeness and adaptiveness of new media by the public relations practitioners in the institutions studied. The questionnaire was constructed to elicit responses that were open-ended in nature. The findings prove that a very substantial number of public relations practitioners are technophobic (fear of technology) and thus, cannot expressly use the new media to carry out their duties in these higher institutions studied. This in no small way, has caused image battering of these citadels of higher learning, by increasing students' unrest, school fees crisis and many major strike actions, which is predominantly the cause of delayed feedback and slow dissemination of information, which is a major feature of the traditional media. To ameliorate the constraints and challenges, which ranges from non-training of public relations practitioners non-provision of I.T.C facilities, shortage in power supply to internet connectivity issues, recommendations were made to expressly improve the use of new media by public relation practitioners.

Keywords: New Media, Public Relations, Practitioners Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt Comparative Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The rise of new media has increased communication and made institutions to communicate or express themselves through blogs, websites, videos, pictures and other user-generated media. Throughout history, the advancement in technology and communication have gone hand-in-hand and the latest technological developments such as the internet have resulted in the advancement of the science of communication to a new level. The process of human communication has evolved over the years, with many path-breaking inventions and discoveries heralding revolutions (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith and Zickuhr, 2010).

The new media have revolutionized the practice of public relations in recent times. Personal communication through the social media creates a favourable platform for the public relations

practitioners to communicate faster and reach the public in a more targeted way. In line with the above, Flew (2010) sees the new media as instruments of communication which are different from the conventional instruments like the newspapers. It went further to explain that while the regular media operate as a one-way street where a person could read a newspaper or listen to a report on television with very limited ability to give his thought on the content, the new media operate as a two-way street that gives a person or receiver the ability to communicate. According to Mathee (2008), new media allow the public relations practitioners to communicate directly with their publics, keeping control of the content, distribution and timing of public relations messages as well as reducing their dependence on traditional intermediaries. It equally provides an avenue for public relations practitioners to keep a close watch on the happenings in the public sphere about any special event.

To this end, Blomquest (2012) noted that; now, it is easier for people around the world to publicize their opinion about almost any organization, especially if they have had a bad experience with it. In reaction to the bad word rapidly being spread, public relations practitioners must address the institutions and work to change the public's negative opinion. The new media as vehicles that transmit messages to large and heterogeneous audience are so pervasive in modern public relations practice, therefore social networking tools are wonderful technological tools for facilitating the processes of interaction. With this new media in the field of public relations, practitioners can easily integrate and access mass data about their clients at any point in time.

Therefore, according to Taylor (2007), the internet gives public relations practitioners a unique opportunity to collect information about a variety of issues. However, much of the academic literature has an overall tone of lament that practitioners were simply transferring traditional approaches and models of public relations practice to the web and were not evolving their practice. Porter and Sallot (2003) maintain that past evidence suggests that public relations practitioners were open to using new technology and it seems incongruous that ever a traditional mainstay of public relations practice like media relations is not taking advantage of the possibilities offered by the web (Mouijo, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

The coming onboard of this new communication technology into the PR practice has greatly changed the nature and approach of carrying out public relations activities today. Technology has transformed the way we communicate in recent years and this has had specific effects on the practice of public relations, how and where we work, how we communicate with colleagues, clients and media stakeholders have all been influenced by technology and its evolution. These new media are gradually gaining ground in the public relations environment. It was also assert that their effectiveness in gathering and communicating to targeted audience helps the public relations practitioners to achieve the desired results. Hence the use of new media and social media sites in public relations practice spans across increased media exposure, funding, participation and has increased enthusiasm in many recent public relations activities especially in higher institutions (Hanson, Drumheller Mallard, Mckee and Schlegel,2011). Bearing in mind these laudable attributes of the new media public relation practice, one begins to wonder if these attributes have been inculcated and leveraged by public relations practitioners in these institutions. Moreso, the issue of proficiency amongst practitioners becomes most pertinent amidst other considerations.

Objectives of the Study

New media being the cognitive wheel in which modern day public relations rotate. The objectives of this study, therefore, are to;

1. Find out the extent to which the new media is incorporated in the day to day operations of public relations practitioners in University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University with a view to making appropriate comparisons.
2. Identify the new media used by public relations practitioners in University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University with a view to comparing innovativeness and adaptiveness by the two institutions.
3. Find out the constraints and challenges faced by public relations practitioners in these institutions in the light of new media.

4. Ascertain ways practitioners in these institutions hope to surmount these challenges, establishing gratification and efficiency.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent to which the new media is incorporated in the day to day operations of public relations practitioners in University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University with a view to making appropriate comparisons?
2. What type of new media is used by public relations practitioners in University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University with a view to comparing innovativeness and adaptiveness by the two institutions?
3. What are the constraints and challenges faced by public relations practitioners in these institutions in the light of new media use?
4. What are the ways practitioners in these institutions hope to surmount these challenges, establishing gratification and efficiency?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Public Relations: Marston (1963), in Nkwocha (1999) defines public relations as ‘the top management function which evaluates public attitude, identifies the policies and procedures of an organization with the public interest, and executes a programme of action to earn public understanding and acceptance. Black (1989) in Nwosu (1995) sees public relations “the art and science of achieving harmony with the environment through mutual understanding based on truth and full information. Lattimore (2007) highlights among other things a function of PR that emphasizes media relations as one of its strategies. He opined that information dissemination is important public relations task which implies sharing information with appropriate newspaper, broadcasts, and trade publication editors to enlist their interest in publishing an organization’s news and features.

This requires knowing how newspapers and other media operate, their areas of specialization, the interests of individual editors. Competition is keen for the attention of editors and Broadcasters, who have a limited amount of space and time at their disposal. As Kent and Taylor (2002) puts it, ‘you have to get to the right editor of the right publication with the right story at the right lime’. Although ideas are accepted on the basis of newsworthiness and other readership values, successful practitioners develop relationship of mutual respect and cooperation with the news media that arc useful to both the practitioners and the news people.

All definitions and discussions of public relations refer to publics. Groups that are always important to the organization are called publics and they are generally defined in terms of their organizational relationships, including the media, employees, customers, community, government etc. The mass media is one of the most important publics of any organization because they serve as a bridge, linking an organization to its various publics, especially the external publics. Public relations managers rely on the mass media to publicize their organization’s activities and interpret their organizational policies to the general public. This is why Nwosu (1995) declares:

It is therefore necessary for any modern public relations practitioners to understand the various public relations media available to him in the discharge of its functions, the characteristics of these media, their strengths and weaknesses, how best to use them and how to achieve the best results with them in line with clearly stated public relations objectives. Secondly, it is very necessary to know the *dramatis personae* or key operators of these mass media and how best to relate to them or work with them to achieve the media relations and other public relations goals of the organization concerned.

The Work of Public Relations: What does public relations do? The sophistication of the field makes quick definitions cohesive. Public relations practiced well, is an honest persuasive enterprise that contributes to social good by building consensus. This is done through communication, mostly through social media and even mass media. The communication is on behalf of institutions to build mutually beneficial relationships with their constituents groups called publics (Walter, Steve and Simon, 2011).

Social Media/New Media: The new media have introduced new dimensions to human communication. One of such dimensions is the introduction of the social media. Social media are media for social interaction. They are sites that are based on user participation that allow individuals or groups to generate content and engage in conversations and exchange of contents (Wikipedia). Social media are also online media that promote participation, openness, conversation, community, connectedness, interactivity, collaboration and information sharing (Mayfield, 2008; Rodman, 2010 and Stagno, 2010). Social media build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows for collaboration and the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010), Arens, Weigold and Arens (2011) remark that "these sites are called social, primarily, for their ability to connect like-individuals in a manner that have never been seen before". Social media allow people to exchange personal comments, political views, business ideas and commercial messages using various online platforms such as blogs, micro blogs and social networks.

Weblogging: The web is the short form of World Wide Web. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the web is the leading information retrieval service of the Internet. The Web gives users access to a vast array of documents that are connected to each other by means of hypertext or hypermedia links -i.e. hyperlinks, electronic connections that link related pieces of information in order to allow a user easy access to them. Hypertext allows the user to select a word from text and thereby access other documents that contain additional information pertaining to that word; hypermedia documents feature links to images, sounds, animations, and movies. The Web operates within the Internet's basic client-server format; servers are computer programs that store and transmit documents to other computers on the network when asked to, while clients are programs that request documents from a server as the user asks for them. Browser software allows users to view the retrieved documents.

Hub in a digital Lifestyle: According to Douglas (2011) apple visionary Steve jobs saw a single device as a hub for accessing the whole media landscape. His giant stride toward this digital future was the iPad tablet – light, portable and capable of tapping into news, music, video, in fact everything the traditional media did separately but all in one device. This was predicted by the new media Guru, Marshall McLuhan. He foresaw that one day, a device will function as a multi-dimensional gadget. Also, Negroponte, a new media expert, called it "Convergence". This can be explained in the use of the iPad that can function as a handset, a calculator, a mini notebook, a desktop, an alarm clock and many other internet functions and it is still in one light, portable gadget.

Computer Revolution: Just about everybody is struggling still to make sense of the gigantic transforming influence of computers dating back roughly to 1980 (John, 2013). Every new theory on what is happening and where it's all going is eclipsed almost immediately in a dizzying accumulation of innovation and adaptation. Before, he died in 2011, Apple Wunderkind Steve jobs devised a useful model for understanding new media landscape. Job said it all began roughly in 1980 with what is commonly called the computer revolution. The jobs' mode is a three-stage map, in the first stage, the computer revolution, computers exponentially increased productivity. Although, nothing compared to that came later. The economic, social and technological impact was overwhelming (John, 2011). Equally, sometimes the post 1980 period is characterized as the information revolution, which captured the transcendental changes that were afloat as far reaching as the industrial revolution two centuries ago.

Internet Revolution: From 1994 to 2000, the role of personal computers shifted into universal interconnectivity. All it took was a modem to hook up low-cost computers to connect to anyone with the same equipment anywhere in the planet. As a result of technical limitations, communication was mostly by text, but soon there was graphic, still-video, audio and moving visual capabilities. According to Clark and Slyke (2010) with the internet revolution, as Jobs called it that period, computers became a vehicle for consumer transactions. The internet, indeed, created a market place of commerce. The internet revolution, although itself a major transformation, was a mere precursor of what lay ahead.

Digital Lifestyle: Clark and Slyke (2010) opined that if anyone had the stature to define the latest era in the digital transformation dating to the 1980s, it was Steve Jobs. He was an innovator from the first Apple computer models in 1970s. To Apple aficionados in 2001, Jobs declared that the personal computer would become "the digital hub for digital lifestyle". Hence term digital lifestyle stuck. The personal

computer, Apple's Books and MacBook most of all, had capabilities to connect to a wide range of products, for example, digital cameras, digital books and other once ink-on-paper products, retail music libraries, and in jobs vision, smart phones.

Portals: Early attempts to draw mass audiences to the internet with "walled gardens" of services, such as America Online offered (AOL) were successful but short lived. The AOL concept was doomed by the invention of browsers. Thus, with browsers, even first time computer owners at home found access to the whole internet, hence it is a lot beyond the garden wall (John, 2013).

An Overview of Facebook: Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg with his college roommates and the fellow students Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes at Harvard University as a networking site for students. It was launched in February 4, 2004, owned and operated by Facebook Inc. It has over 900 million active users, more than half of them using Facebook on mobile devices. For Facebook communication to take place, users must register before using the site, after which they may create a personal profile, add other users as friends and exchange messages, including automatic notification when they update their profile.

Founded in 2004, Facebook is a Social Network Site (SNS) that was originally designed for the use of college age students, and operated under restriction to keep it so. Rosen (2007) explains that the name Facebook originates from "the small photo albums that colleges once gave to incoming freshmen and faculty to help them cope with meeting so many new people". The college age demographic restriction only lasted two years until 2006 when its founders decided to make it open to the public, so long as a person has a valid email address and the computer skills necessary to create a profile. Facebook has become one of the leading Social Network Sites on the internet today and is used by millions of people around the world. It reconnects regular folks with old friends and strengthens their bonds with new pals (Stone, 2009). It is simply a multi-billion-dollar organization that has affected the way people communicate today,

Functions of Facebook: Facebook is conceptualized as consisting of four primary functions: social searching, social browsing (Lampe, 2006), impression management and communication (Walther, 2009). Social searching refers to the act of looking for specific information about offline acquaintances with the goal of knowing them better. However, social searching, which we suggest is an extractive information seeking strategy, is more concerned with goal-oriented surveillance, where participants move from the general content to 'die pages belonging to a particular person. Each Facebook user has their own profile page where they display and disclose information related to their age, gender, educational background, employment, and romantic-relationship status, in addition to their pictures (either self-posted or 'tagged' by others), videos., and blog-like notes (Sunden, 2003). On the other hand, social browsing, is a less particular act of "surfing" general information about both friends and strangers that, is made available on social-network sites. Social browsing,, which we suggest is a passive social information-seeking strategy, is conceptualized as the selection of general pages, when participants were not looking at information about a particular person but rather browsing through a pool of information that involved more than one person or one type of information (e.g., the newsfeed page, all events page, all friends page, etc.)

Brief History of New Media: According to Castells and Maxwell (1996) in the 1950s connections between computer and radical art began to grow stronger. It was not until the 1980s that Alankay and his co-workers at Xerox PARC began to give the computability of a personal computer to the individual, rather than have a big organisation be in charge of this. Until the 1980s media relied primarily upon print and analog broadcast models, such as those of television and radio. The last twenty-five years have seen the rapid transformation into media which are predicated upon the use of digital technologies, such as the internet and video games. However, these examples are only a small representation of new media. The use of digital computers has transformed the remaining 'old' media, as suggested by the advent of digital television and online publications (Shapiro and Hoynes, 2003).

Andrew and Shapiro (1999) argues that the "emergence of new, digital technologies signals a potentially radical shift of who is in control of information, experience and resources". Russell (1991) suggests that while the "new media" have technical capabilities to pull in one direction, economic and social forces pull back in the opposite direction. According to Russell (1991), we are witnessing the evolution of a universal

interconnected network of audio, video and electronic text communications that will blur the distinction between interpersonal and mass communication and between public and private communication.

New Media as Tool for Social Change: Accordingly, Manovich (2001) new media has a rich and storied history that has changed at a rapid rate since it became widely used. He maintained that the Zapatista Army of National liberation of Chiapas, Mexico were the first major movement to make widely recognized and effective use of new media for communiqués and organizing in 1994. He went further to say that since then that the new media has been used extensively by social movements and institutions to educate, organize, share cultural products of movements, communicate etc.

Castells (1996) states that Chanelle Adams, a feminist blogger for the Bi-weekly web-paper “The Media” says that in her commitment to anti-oppressive feminist work, it seems obligatory for her to stay in the know just to remain relevant to the struggle. In order for Adams and other feminists who work towards spreading their messages to the public, new media becomes crucial towards completing this task, allowing people to access the movements information instantaneously.

METHODOLOGY

The study used survey design. Ohaja (2009) sees survey design as “a study of the characteristics of a sample through questioning that enables a researcher to make generalizations concerning his population of interest”. The justification of this design as it relates to this study, is that, it is the most appropriate, when it comes to eliciting responses relevant to keynote research questions. Thus, the researcher considers it more appropriate as it elicited appropriate responses relevant to the research questions raised in the study. The total population consists all the staff in the public relations departments in the two institutions were used. The Public Relations Department in University of Port Harcourt is 40 while that of Rivers State University is 40, making a total of eighty (80) persons. The population of the study is manageable, therefore, an enumeration exercise becomes most pertinent. In other words, a census of the entire population was carried out.

The instrument used for this study was questionnaire. To achieve this, the instrument consists of sections A and B. Section A was designed to elicit personal information or data such as age, gender, educational status, that is the demographic factors while section B which is the psychographic factors contains 24 items which focus on new media use by public relations practitioners in the University of Port Harcourt and the Rivers State University with a view to making a projective comparison. Simple percentage was used for the analysis of the data collected from the research questions.

RESULTS

The data collected were analyzed, presented and interpreted in this chapter. It is pertinent to note that, the research questions are used as a guide. The presentation of data is divided into sections A and B, which are the demographics and the psychographics. A total of 100 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the public relations departments, the Registrar’s office, the VC’s office and the information and technology centres in both the Rivers State University and the University of Port Harcourt respectively. The response rate was 80.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Table 4.1.1: Presentation of Respondents by Place of Work

Response category	Frequency	Percentage %
R.S.U	40	50%
University of Port Harcourt	40	50%
Total	80	100%

Source: Survey Data, 2017

The respondents of both Universities are the same.

Table 4.1.2: Distribution of Respondents by Departments

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage %
P.R. Departments	25	31%
V’C’s Office	15	19%
Registrar’s Office	20	25%
I.T.C. Department	20	25%
Total	80	100%

Source: Survey Data, 2017

The public relation departments capture the highest percentage of 31%.

Table 4.1.3: Frequency in the Quarterly use of New Media Use In both Universities

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
R.S.U.	25	31%
University of Port Harcourt	18	23%
Technophobic	37	46%
Total	80	100

Source: Survey Data, 2017

46% is for Technophobic, which is the highest

Table 4.1.4: The Most Preferred Type of New Media Used In Public Relations In Rivers State University/University of Port Harcourt

Response Category	Institution	Frequency	Percentage
Bulk messaging/websites	Rivers State University	40	50%
Facebook/websites	UNI. of PH	40	50%
Total		80	100%

Source: Survey Data -2017.

50% of the Rivers State University respondents anchored more on the usage of bulk messaging and the university’s websites while 50%theUniversity of Port Harcourt public relations uses facebook and her website.

Table 4.1.5: Result Oriented in the Type of New Media Used

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
R.S.U	65	81%
UNI. of PH	15	19%
Total	80	100%

Source: Survey Data, 2017

The Rivers State University respondents measured 81%, which is the highest.

Table 4.1.6: Adaptability of New Media Use by Public Relations practitioners in both Universities

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
R.S.U	10	13%
UNI. of PH	8	10%
Technophobic	62	77%
Total	80	100%

Source: Survey Data, 2017

77% represents technophobic, from both Universities.

Table 4.1.7: Innovativeness of New Media Use, by Public Relations Practitioners in both Universities

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
R.S.U	28	35%
UNI. of PH	10	12%
Technophobic	42	53%
Total	80	100%

Source: Survey Data, 2017

53% represent technophobic from both Universities which is most prevalent

Table 4.1.8: Constraints and Challenges In Using New Media by Rivers State University and University of Port Harcourt.

Constraints/Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Network issues	10	13%
Not user friendly	5	6%
Constant power failure	10	13%
Non-Maintenance	10	13%
Non-trainings/re-trainings	30	36%
Non-updating of new media gadgets	10	13%
Non-conducive room temperature for computers/hardware	5	6%
Total	80	100

Source: Survey Data, 2017

The most nagging constraint is the non-trainings and re-training of public relations staff, which is 36%

4.1.9: Ways of Ameliorating these Challenges

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Training of Staff of The Public Relations Departments	40	50%
Provision of I.T.C facilities	40	50%
Total	80	100%

Source: Survey Data – 2017.

50% opted for training of Public Relations staff, while the 50% also suggested the provision of I.T.C facilities.

Table 4.1.10: Functional I.T.C. Gadgets (Computers) Owned by both Universities

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
R.S.U	300	67%
UNI. of PH	150	33%
Total	450	100%

Source: Survey Data, 2017.

Rivers State University has 67% of functional computers which is the highest.

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

This researcher keenly and systematically studied in comparison of the data gathered, that the use of new media has not been embraced in totality by public relations practitioners in both the Rivers State University and the University of Port Harcourt, respectively. Additionally, as Pamell and Parmley wrote in *Public Relations Tactics*, “The PR offices in higher education play a major role in boosting enrollment, rankings and publicity — so it is vital for them to understand and use best practices and social media to accomplish their communications goals” (Pamell and Parmley, (2009). Most Public Relations Practitioners are cyber phobic which results to technophobia. The resultant effect leads to the non incorporation of the use of new media in the routine duties of these information experts. New media have been meagerly practiced, in the disseminating of information, retrieving of feedbacks, conflict management/institutional development, the achievement of mutual understanding between the corporate publics and herself, at the same time, maximizing corporate goals and aspirations. Russell (1991) suggests that while the “new media” have technical capabilities to pull in one direction, economic and social forces pull back in the opposite direction. According to Russell (1991) we are witnessing the evolution of a universal interconnected network of audio, video and electronic text communications that will blur the distinction between interpersonal and mass communication and between public and private communication. Allow forms of communication that were previously separate to overlap and interconnect. Consequently, it has been the contention of scholars such as Douglas and Bohman (2003) that new media and particularly the internet provide the potential for a democratic postmodern public sphere in which citizens can participate in well informed, non-hierarchical debate pertaining to their social structures.

Apparently, the Rivers State University is slightly above performance in view of her innovativeness and adaptiveness of the use of new media by her public relations department as compared to her sister institution, the University of Port Harcourt. However, both universities are still in their crawling stage and are yet to perfect the use of new media. It was painstakingly observed that, both universities’ public relations practitioners do not effectively engage in the utmost use of their institutions’ websites and occasionally, the public relations practitioners of the Rivers State University venture into the use of bulk-messaging, while that of the University of Port Harcourt uses Facebook. Additionally, as Pamell and Parmley wrote in *Public Relations Tactics*, “The PR offices in higher education, play a major role in boosting enrollment, rankings and publicity — so it is vital for them to understand and use best practices and social media to accomplish their communications goals” (Pamell and Parmley,(2009). Alarminglly, despite the fact that the public relations practitioners of both institutions are enthusiastic about the use of new media, yet the constraints and challenges have maimed their efforts to effectively carry out these duties. These are ranging from shortage of constant power supply, poor internet connectivity, non-training of personnel of the public relations units, non-maintenance of I.T.C. facilities and many more.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking into cognizance, the data collected, which portrayed the need of the use of new media by public relations practitioners, their innovative/adaptive skills, their constraints/challenges and ways of surmounting these challenges in establishing gratifications and efficiency, buttressed in the conclusion, the following is thus recommended:

- (1) New Media Awareness and Compliance by the Management of the Universities: There should be a realistic involvement of the different managements of the Rivers State University and the

University of Port Harcourt. The importance of the use of New media should be showcased to them and a high percentage of compliance should be maintained at all levels of the University's structure, especially the public relations units. When their managements are zealous, passionate and committed on new media, the public relations practitioners, would have no choice, but to advance in her new media usage. The new media should be prioritized. There must be a holistic approach, which must be coherent, inclusive and mandatory. Incentives and rewards should be encouraged to ensure 100% participation of all staff and students.

- (2) **Improvement of New Media Literacy:** The University is the citadel of learning and must adapt to the ever evolving times of modernity, since it is the ivory tower and cognitive wheel, where modern literacy rotates. Other models of institutions like the banking industry, politics etc are constantly evolving, so should the Universities which are the pinnacle of that knowledge, lead. Also seminars, symposiums, fora and workshops should be encouraged by the Universities on the most modern trend of new media, which in turn has immeasurable benefits. The public relations practitioners should be trained and retrained in the vast knowledge, skills and usage of new media, so this will increase their performance greatly. This should be taken seriously, because of the paradigm that has been used by the public relations practitioners are regrettable obsolete, therefore literacy in new media is highly paramount. These will extremely curb technophobia.
- (3) **Updating, Provision and Maintenance of New Media Facilities:** The Rivers State University and the University of Port Harcourt, from the data collected, have sizable information technology gadgets; however, most of these facilities are rather obsolete. The Universities should partner with government, corporate and individual bodies for the updating and provision of more sophisticated internet facilities. On the one hand, the maintenance of these gadgets should be manned and checked periodically by experts, to improve on the efficient use of the new media by public relations practitioners.
- (4) **Collaboration with the ITC:** The Information Technology Centre is already an embodiment of New media technology. For the public relations practitioner to be vast in skill and professionalism, then there must be blended affiliation of the public relations unit and the information technology centre of the universities.
- (5) **Availability and Improvement of the University's Internet System:** For new media to be available, sustained and used by the public relations practitioners, internet connectivity should be available and the broad band within the university should be improved from time to time, the servers should be routinely checked and connectivity should be available in the entire public relations unit.

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