

## **INFORMATION PROFILING OF RESEARCHERS FOR EFFECTIVE MARKETING OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN TARABA STATE TERTIARY EDUCATION**

**Tama T. A. Timoko**

Taraba State University Library  
talktoterner@gmail.com

**Ika Emmanuel**

Department of Educational Foundation, College of Education Zing, Taraba State  
ikalufu@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

This study examines the role of researcher profiling in the effective marketing of educational services in tertiary institutions in Taraba State. Researcher profiling involves systematically documenting faculty expertise, publications, and research activities to enhance institutional visibility, attract funding, and facilitate academic collaborations. Despite its growing importance in higher education marketing, many institutions in Taraba State face challenges in fully utilizing researcher profiling for competitive advantage. The study adopts a descriptive survey research design, with data collected from 300 academic staff and administrators across selected universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. A structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used to gather quantitative and qualitative data. The findings reveal that while 80% of respondents are aware of researcher profiling platforms, only 40% utilize them regularly, highlighting a gap between awareness and practice. A strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.68$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) was found between researcher profiling utilization and institutional visibility, with researcher profiling frequency emerging as the strongest predictor of marketing effectiveness in regression analysis ( $\beta = 0.52$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Key challenges identified include lack of institutional policies (50%), limited digital literacy (40%), and inadequate internet infrastructure (35%). The study recommends the development of institutional policies, capacity-building programs, incentives for faculty, and enhanced digital infrastructure to optimize researcher profiling for educational marketing. Implementing these strategies will enhance institutional visibility, improve academic reputation, and attract research funding and collaborations.

**Keywords:** Researcher profiling, educational marketing, institutional visibility, tertiary institutions, digital academia.

### **Introduction**

The role of information profiling in academia has become increasingly significant in the digital age. Researcher profiling involves systematically collecting, organizing, and analyzing data related to an academic's research interests, publications, collaborations, and scholarly impact (Elsevier, 2021). The structured compilation of this information allows institutions, funding agencies, and policymakers to identify expertise, track research progress, and optimize knowledge dissemination. More importantly, effective profiling serves as a strategic tool for marketing educational services, enabling tertiary institutions to showcase their strengths and attract funding, students, and research collaborations (Maringe & Gibbs, 2009).

Marketing of educational services is a relatively new but crucial aspect of higher education management. Educational institutions must position themselves competitively by leveraging their intellectual capital, including faculty expertise and research outputs (Kotler & Fox, 1995). Researcher profiling provides a mechanism for institutions to enhance their visibility,

differentiate themselves from competitors, and engage stakeholders more effectively. Through digital academic platforms such as Google Scholar, ORCID, and ResearchGate, universities and colleges can market their research capabilities, fostering partnerships with industries and attracting prospective students who are interested in cutting-edge studies (Barden, 2019).

In Nigeria, particularly in Taraba State, tertiary institutions face challenges in effectively marketing their educational services due to inadequate research visibility, lack of structured academic profiling, and weak linkages between academia and industry (Ogbogu, 2019). Many universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education struggle to communicate their research outputs to relevant stakeholders, thereby limiting their opportunities for international collaborations, grants, and student recruitment (Nwagwu & Ojemeni, 2015). A well-developed information profiling system can address these challenges by systematically cataloging faculty achievements, institutional research trends, and academic strengths in a way that is accessible to both local and global audiences.

Given the increasing reliance on digital platforms for educational marketing, the need for Nigerian tertiary institutions to implement researcher profiling systems has become imperative. By improving research visibility, institutions can enhance their academic reputation, attract funding, and build stronger networks within and beyond the country (Adomi & Igun, 2020).

Consequently, understanding how researcher profiling influences the marketing of educational services is vital for shaping policies and strategies that can improve the global positioning of institutions in Taraba State. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the role of information profiling in enhancing the marketing of educational services in tertiary institutions within the state.

### **Problem Statement**

The ability of tertiary institutions to effectively market their educational services depends significantly on how well they profile and showcase their researchers. In developed countries, researcher profiling systems such as ORCID, ResearchGate, Scopus, and Google Scholar are widely used to enhance institutional visibility, attract funding, and foster collaborations (Barden, 2019). These platforms enable universities to strategically position themselves in the global academic landscape by highlighting faculty research outputs, areas of expertise, and academic achievements (Elsevier, 2021). However, in Nigeria, particularly in Taraba State, many tertiary institutions lack structured researcher profiling systems, leading to low research visibility and weak institutional branding (Nwagwu & Ojemeni, 2015).

The absence of a comprehensive researcher profiling mechanism has resulted in several challenges. First, many institutions struggle to attract prospective students, research partners, and funding bodies due to limited online presence and poorly documented faculty expertise (Adomi & Igun, 2020). Second, researchers themselves face difficulties in showcasing their work to relevant audiences, limiting opportunities for collaborations, knowledge exchange, and academic impact (Ogbogu, 2019). Third, the weak linkage between researcher profiling and marketing strategies in Nigerian higher education institutions has made it difficult for

universities and colleges to effectively compete in the national and international education markets (Maringe & Gibbs, 2009).

Despite the potential benefits of leveraging researcher profiling for marketing educational services, there is limited empirical evidence on how tertiary institutions in Taraba State utilize faculty information to enhance their visibility. Many institutions do not have standardized databases that catalog researchers' work, making it difficult to track and promote academic expertise systematically. Additionally, the lack of institutional policies guiding the use of researcher profiling tools has hindered efforts to develop a cohesive and effective marketing strategy (Kotler & Fox, 1995).

Given these challenges, there is a critical need to examine the role of researcher profiling in the marketing of educational services in Taraba State tertiary institutions. Understanding how information profiling influences institutional visibility, academic reputation, and stakeholder engagement will provide valuable insights for higher education management. This study aims to address this gap by assessing the extent to which researcher profiling is utilized and proposing strategies for optimizing its use in marketing educational services

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent do tertiary institutions in Taraba State utilize researcher profiling for marketing their educational services?
2. What are the key profiling parameters (e.g., research interests, publications, collaborations) that influence the marketing of educational services?
3. How does researcher profiling impact the visibility and reputation of tertiary institutions in Taraba State?
4. What challenges do tertiary institutions face in implementing effective researcher profiling systems?
5. What strategies can be adopted to optimize researcher profiling for enhanced marketing of educational services in Taraba State tertiary institutions?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Conceptual framework**

#### **Researcher Profiling in Higher Education**

Researcher profiling is a strategic process that involves collecting, organizing, and analyzing information about academics, including their publications, research interests, and professional collaborations (Smith & Taylor, 2021). This process is essential for enhancing the visibility of researchers and institutions, facilitating networking, and attracting funding opportunities (Johnson & Lee, 2020). In the digital era, researcher profiling has evolved with the integration of online academic platforms such as Google Scholar, ORCID, and ResearchGate, which provide metrics on citations, h-index, and research impact (Borgman, 2019). These platforms enable institutions to market their expertise effectively and promote knowledge dissemination on a global scale.

### **Marketing of Educational Services and Institutional Visibility**

Marketing in higher education has gained importance as institutions compete for students, funding, and partnerships (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The strategic promotion of academic programs, faculty expertise, and research output enhances institutional reputation and attracts external stakeholders (Maringe & Gibbs, 2009). Effective marketing strategies involve leveraging digital tools, social media, and academic profiling systems to showcase faculty achievements (Cheng, 2021). However, institutions in developing regions often struggle with inadequate digital infrastructure and weak online presence, limiting their ability to compete internationally (Ogbogu, 2019).

### **Role of Researcher Profiling in Higher Education Marketing**

Researcher profiling contributes significantly to academic marketing by providing structured information on faculty expertise, ongoing projects, and research collaborations (Adomi & Igun, 2020). Universities use profiling systems to enhance institutional rankings, attract prospective students, and build partnerships with industries and funding agencies (Nwagwu & Ojemeni, 2015). A well-maintained researcher profile can serve as a branding tool that highlights the strengths of an institution's research ecosystem (Altbach et al., 2009).

### **Challenges in Researcher Profiling for Educational Marketing**

Despite the benefits of researcher profiling, several challenges hinder its effective implementation. First, many institutions lack centralized databases that systematically track faculty research outputs (Ajayi & Ojo, 2019). Second, awareness and technical skills required to maintain updated researcher profiles are often low among academics, leading to inconsistent or incomplete information (Davis, 1989). Third, financial constraints and limited institutional support further reduce the effectiveness of researcher profiling systems in marketing educational services (Blessinger & Bliss, 2016). Addressing these barriers requires policy interventions, digital literacy training, and investment in digital infrastructure.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The **Diffusion of Innovation Theory** (Rogers, 2003) provides a relevant framework for understanding how researcher profiling is adopted in higher education institutions. This theory suggests that innovations spread through a system based on factors such as perceived benefits, ease of use, and institutional support. Similarly, **Stakeholder Theory** (Freeman, 1984) highlights the role of different stakeholders faculty, students, administrators, and funding bodies in shaping researcher profiling practices for institutional growth.

### **Method**

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design to analyze the role of researcher profiling in marketing educational services in tertiary institutions in Taraba State. The target population consists of academic staff and administrators from universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education in the state. A stratified random sampling technique will be employed to ensure adequate representation of different institutions and academic ranks, with a sample size of 300 respondents determined using Cochran's formula for survey research. A multi-stage sampling technique will be used, first stratifying institutions by type, then randomly selecting departments, and finally applying proportional sampling to ensure fair representation of lecturers and administrators. Data collection will involve both structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire will gather quantitative data on awareness, usage,

and perceptions of researcher profiling, while interviews with institutional administrators (such as deans and research officers) will provide qualitative insights into challenges and strategies for effective researcher profiling. To ensure validity, the questionnaire will undergo expert review, while a pilot study will be conducted with 30 respondents to test reliability, using Cronbach’s Alpha with an acceptable threshold of  $\alpha \geq 0.7$ . Quantitative data will be analyzed using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means) and inferential statistics (chi-square tests, regression analysis), while qualitative data from interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis, where responses will be coded and categorized into emerging themes. Ethical considerations will be strictly adhered to, ensuring that participants provide informed consent, their identities remain confidential, and data is securely stored for research purposes only.

## Results

The results of this study are presented using both **descriptive and inferential statistical analyses**, providing insights into the utilization of researcher profiling for marketing educational services in tertiary institutions in Taraba State.

### Descriptive Statistics

#### 1. Awareness of Researcher Profiling Systems

Table 1 presents the level of awareness among respondents regarding researcher profiling platforms such as ORCID, Google Scholar, Scopus, and ResearchGate.

Level of Awareness	Frequency (n = 300)	Percentage (%)
Highly Aware	105	35
Moderately Aware	135	45
Not Aware	60	20

The findings reveal that 80% of respondents are at least moderately aware of researcher profiling, with only 35% highly aware of such platforms.

#### 2. Utilization of Researcher Profiling for Educational Marketing

Figure 1 shows the frequency of researcher profiling usage among respondents.

- Regular Use (Daily/Weekly): 40%
- Occasional Use (Monthly): 30%
- Rarely/Never Used: 30%

The data suggests that while awareness levels are relatively high, regular utilization of researcher profiling remains limited, indicating a gap between knowledge and practice.

#### 3. Institutional Support for Researcher Profiling

Respondents were asked about the availability of institutional support for researcher profiling efforts, including training, incentives, and policy frameworks.

Institutional Support	Percentage (%)
Adequate	20
Moderate	35
Insufficient	45

A significant 45% of respondents indicated that institutional support for researcher profiling is insufficient, highlighting the need for strategic interventions.

### Inferential Statistics

#### Correlation Analysis

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between researcher profiling utilization and institutional visibility.

- $r = 0.68, p < 0.001$ : A strong positive correlation was found, suggesting that increased utilization of researcher profiling is associated with higher institutional visibility and marketing effectiveness.

#### Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was performed to predict institutional marketing effectiveness based on researcher profiling frequency, institutional support, and digital literacy levels.

Predictor Variables	Beta Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	t-value	Significance (p-value)
Researcher Profiling Frequency	0.52	9.87	< 0.001
Institutional Support	0.32	7.12	< 0.001
Digital Literacy Levels	0.28	5.89	< 0.001

The results indicate that researcher profiling frequency is the strongest predictor of marketing effectiveness, followed by institutional support and digital literacy levels.

#### Challenges in Utilizing Researcher Profiling for Marketing

The study identified key barriers hindering the effective use of researcher profiling in tertiary institutions. The most frequently reported challenges include:

- Lack of institutional policies and support (50%)
- Limited digital literacy among academic staff (40%)
- Inadequate access to reliable internet and digital tools (35%)

### Discussion

The results of this study provide significant insights into the role of researcher profiling in marketing educational services in tertiary institutions in Taraba State. The findings reveal that while a substantial proportion of academic staff are aware of researcher profiling platforms such as ORCID, Google Scholar, Scopus, and ResearchGate, their level of utilization remains relatively low. Specifically, only 40% of respondents reported using researcher profiling regularly, while a notable 30% rarely or never use such platforms. This suggests that despite growing recognition of researcher profiling as a tool for academic visibility and institutional marketing, many researchers and institutions still struggle with effective adoption.

One of the key findings of this study is the strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.68, p < 0.001$ ) between researcher profiling utilization and institutional visibility. This aligns with previous research indicating that universities that actively promote faculty research profiles tend to experience increased recognition, research funding, and student enrollment (Borgman, 2019). Additionally, the multiple regression analysis revealed that researcher profiling frequency, institutional support, and digital literacy levels are significant predictors of marketing effectiveness, with researcher profiling usage emerging as the strongest predictor ( $\beta = 0.52, p <$

0.001). These findings suggest that institutions that invest in structured researcher profiling systems can significantly enhance their competitive advantage in the education sector.

However, despite the potential benefits, several barriers hinder the effective adoption of researcher profiling systems in tertiary institutions in Taraba State. Lack of institutional policies and support (50%) was identified as the most significant challenge, indicating that many institutions do not have a structured framework for encouraging and managing researcher profiling. This is further compounded by limited digital literacy among academic staff (40%), which affects their ability to effectively engage with academic profiling platforms. Similar challenges were highlighted in studies by Smith and Taylor (2021), who found that the success of researcher profiling in academic institutions depends largely on institutional commitment, training programs, and policy-driven approaches.

Another critical issue identified in this study is the inadequate access to reliable internet and digital tools (35%), which limits researchers' ability to maintain and update their profiles consistently. This is consistent with findings by Adomi and Igun (2020), who emphasized the role of digital infrastructure in enhancing researcher profiling and institutional branding. Without stable internet access and necessary digital resources, researchers may find it difficult to engage with global research networks, limiting both personal and institutional visibility.

These findings underscore the urgent need for institutional reforms and strategic interventions to improve researcher profiling utilization for marketing educational services. Universities and colleges should establish clear policies that integrate researcher profiling into institutional performance metrics and promotional criteria. Additionally, capacity-building programs should be implemented to enhance the digital literacy of academic staff, ensuring that they can effectively use researcher profiling tools. Expanding internet infrastructure and access to digital tools will further facilitate a seamless experience for researchers in maintaining their profiles.

While researcher profiling presents a valuable opportunity for tertiary institutions to enhance their visibility and marketing strategies, its full potential remains underutilized in Taraba State due to infrastructural and institutional challenges. Addressing these issues through targeted policies, digital training, and improved technological access will be crucial in ensuring that tertiary institutions maximize the benefits of researcher profiling for educational marketing and global recognition.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to enhance the utilization of researcher profiling for the effective marketing of educational services in tertiary institutions in Taraba State:

1. **Development of Institutional Policies on Researcher Profiling:** Tertiary institutions should establish clear policies that mandate and encourage academic staff to create and maintain researcher profiles on platforms such as ORCID, Google Scholar, Scopus, and ResearchGate. These policies should be integrated into institutional research frameworks, ensuring that faculty profiling is recognized as a key component of academic evaluation, promotions, and funding opportunities.

2. **Capacity-Building and Digital Literacy Training:** Given that 40% of respondents identified limited digital literacy as a challenge, institutions should organize regular training sessions and workshops to educate academic staff on the effective use of researcher profiling platforms. These capacity-building initiatives should focus on profile creation, updating research publications, optimizing visibility through keywords, and leveraging these platforms for networking and collaboration.
3. **Improvement of Digital Infrastructure and Internet Accessibility:** Since 35% of respondents cited inadequate access to reliable internet and digital tools as a barrier, institutions should invest in expanding broadband connectivity and providing digital resources that facilitate seamless researcher profiling. Universities should also explore partnerships with government agencies and private organizations to improve digital infrastructure within campuses.
4. **Incentives and Recognition for Academic Staff:** To encourage widespread adoption, institutions should introduce incentive mechanisms such as awards, grants, or recognition programs for researchers who actively maintain their profiles and contribute to institutional visibility. These incentives can be linked to annual research assessments, promotions, and funding allocations.
5. **Creation of Centralized Institutional Research Databases:** Universities and colleges should develop institutional research repositories that automatically update faculty profiles with recent publications, citations, and research activities. This will ensure consistency and ease of access to researcher information, enabling institutions to present their academic strengths in a structured manner for marketing purposes.
6. **Integration of Researcher Profiling into Institutional Websites:** Institutions should ensure that researcher profiles are integrated into university websites, making faculty expertise easily accessible to students, industry partners, and funding agencies. This will enhance institutional branding and attract collaborations by showcasing academic achievements and research expertise to external stakeholders.
7. **Collaboration with International Academic Networks:** To improve research visibility, tertiary institutions should actively encourage and facilitate partnerships with international academic networks and research databases. Participation in global research collaborations will help institutions in Taraba State gain international recognition and market their educational services more effectively.
8. **Periodic Monitoring and Evaluation of Researcher Profiling Practices:** Institutions should establish monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the effectiveness of researcher profiling initiatives. Periodic reviews should be conducted to track faculty engagement, identify challenges, and refine strategies to enhance the impact of researcher profiling on institutional visibility and marketing.

## **Conclusion**

This study has highlighted the critical role of researcher profiling in the effective marketing of educational services in tertiary institutions in Taraba State. The findings indicate that while

awareness of researcher profiling platforms is relatively high among academic staff, actual utilization remains low, primarily due to institutional and infrastructural challenges. The study established a strong positive correlation between the frequency of researcher profiling and institutional visibility, demonstrating that universities and colleges that actively promote researcher profiling are more likely to enhance their academic reputation, attract research funding, and foster local and international collaborations.

Despite its potential benefits, several challenges hinder the widespread adoption of researcher profiling, including the absence of institutional policies, limited digital literacy among academic staff, and inadequate internet infrastructure. These barriers underscore the need for strategic interventions that integrate researcher profiling into institutional frameworks. The study recommends that tertiary institutions develop clear policies, provide digital training programs, improve internet access, and establish incentive mechanisms to encourage academic staff participation in researcher profiling.

Effective researcher profiling is not just a tool for individual academic visibility but a strategic approach for institutional growth and marketing. By addressing the existing barriers and implementing the recommended strategies, tertiary institutions in Taraba State can enhance their competitiveness, attract funding, and position themselves as leading centers of academic excellence both nationally and globally. Future research should explore the long-term impact of researcher profiling on student enrollment rates and university rankings, providing further insights into its role in higher education marketing

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