
Library Policy and Service Delivery in South-South Nigeria Federal Universities

Chibueze Norbert Onwuekwe
Federal Polytechnic Oko, Agulu, Nigeria
Email: norbernc@yahoo.com

Abstract

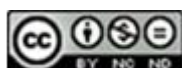
This study investigated the relationship between library policy and service delivery in South-South Nigeria federal universities. Two research questions guided this study, with hypotheses tested at a 0.05 significance level. The study employed a correlational research design. The population consisted of 115 professional librarians. Since the sample size was equal to the population, the study adopted a census approach and a structured questionnaire with a 4-point Likert scale for data collection. Data analysis utilised the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) via the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results indicate a significant relationship between reference service policy, serials management policy, and service delivery in federal universities of South-South Nigeria. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made: Firstly, given the significant relationship between reference service policy and service delivery, libraries should prioritise the effective implementation of reference service policies to enhance service delivery. Secondly, considering the significant relationship between serials management policy and service delivery, library management should prioritise acquiring new journals in line with the serials management policy to meet users' information demands, thereby enhancing library service delivery.

Keywords: Library reference service policy, serial management policy, service delivery federal universities, South-South Nigeria

<https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/udslj.v19i2.7>

Introduction

Richard (2015) defines a library as a collection of books and non-book materials that are organized and maintained for user access. Libraries play an important role in all levels of academic study by providing access to information and resources, supporting education and literacy, and promoting lifelong learning. It is an engine room for all academic institutions. Anyira (2021) stated that the term "Policy" refers to a set of definite action plans or rules officially adopted by a group of people, organisation, or government. Any organisation without a policy is like a moving vehicle without direction. Library policies offer direction to the library in the provision of its services at different units. Library policy is a direction giver. Anyira stated that Library policies include a collection development policy, circulation/lending policy, cataloguing policy, reference policy, serials/periodicals policy, document reproduction/reprographic policy, and e-library policy. Each section of the library has a policy that guides its activities. Reference policy is a set of rules that govern the activities in the reference section of the library. According to Dylla (2023), the reference section of the library contains information-dense resources, such as encyclopaedias, dictionaries, thesauri, atlases, and reference handbooks. This section helps the users identify and locate information



through various reference materials. The academic research collection which includes theses and dissertations is also available in this section. The reference section provides services that help clients make the best use of a library's resources and find the information they require quickly and efficiently. Libraries lack professional reference librarians, and this affects the effective implementation of reference policy.

Serials policy in the library is the rule that governs periodicals collection development. Chester Fritz Library (2022) maintained that the primary purpose of a periodical collection development policy is to establish guidelines for the identification, selection, acquisition, and continuation of periodicals to the intellectual and informational needs of the library's constituency. The scope of the collection consists of all serials, these include periodicals, journals, newspapers, annual (reports, yearbooks), indexes and abstracts, and standing orders which come at least as frequently as once a year. The serials collection encompasses paper, digital, and microformats. Serials are expected to be continual. Discontinuation of some periodicals is experienced by users as a result of poor allocation of funds coming to the library, this affects the effective implementation of the serials and periodicals policy.

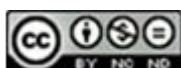
Service delivery is an act of providing a service to clients or customers. Agoh and Omekwu (2021) maintain that library and information service delivery are library processes and activities that are used by libraries to deliver information services and resources to library users, with the main aim of enhancing the activities and productivity of library users. This involved the effective discharging of duties to meet the information needs of the client. Service delivery around the world, as well as in federal universities in South-South Nigeria, depends significantly on established library information policies. These policies guide the service provisions of the library.

The focus of this research is solely on federal universities in South-South Nigeria. Federal universities are tertiary education institutions run and managed by the Federal Government of Nigeria. However, the haphazard practice of reference policies and inadequate implementation of serials/periodical policies tend to affect the service delivery of most federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria. This study, therefore, aims to identify the relationship between library reference service policies, library serials management policies, and service delivery in federal universities in South-South Nigeria to promote the level of library service delivery in these institutions.

Problem Statement

Effective library policies provide a framework that guides academic library services, enabling the achievement of library objectives. Adequate implementation of various library policies leads to effective delivery service in university libraries. Through a literature review, personal observations, and interactions with librarians, several challenges facing university library service delivery in Nigeria have been identified, including Haphazard reference policy practices and inadequate serial policy implementation. These challenges hinder service delivery in federal universities in South-South Nigeria. Despite existing policies in university library information management sections, the lack of adequate implementation of policy remains a significant challenge. This study investigates the relationship between library policies and service delivery in federal universities in South-South Nigeria, with a focus on determining the relationship between library reference service policies, library serials management policies, and service delivery in these institutions.

As such, this study mainly aimed to determine the relationship between library policy and service delivery in Federal Universities in South-South Nigeria. The specific objectives were to determine the relationship between the library reference service policy and service



delivery in federal universities in South-South Nigeria and ascertain the relationship between the library serials management policy and service delivery in federal universities in South-South Nigeria. To achieve the specific objectives, the following questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between the library reference service policy and service delivery in the South-South Nigeria federal universities?
2. What is the relationship between the library serials management policy and service delivery in South-South Nigeria federal universities?

Hypotheses

Additionally, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

- H1. There is no significant relationship between the library reference service policy and service delivery in South-South Nigeria federal universities.*
- H2. There is no significant relationship between the library serials management policy and service delivery in South-South Nigeria federal universities.*

Literature Review

Library Policies

For Ahmadu Bello University (2023), the Library policy is a guide to the operations and management of the library. It serves to maintain standards and avoid inconsistencies. It is used to measure the extent to which a library performs its functions and meets its objectives as well as its systems and services. In line with the above, Case (2010) viewed library and information policy as those laws, regulations, and practices intended to facilitate the creation and dissemination of information throughout society. This means that library policy helps to facilitate the development of information as well as information dissemination for effective service delivery in the library.

Enang and Okwu (2021) maintained that library and information science policy is a set of decisions taken by a government, through appropriate laws and regulations to orient the harmonious development of information transfer activities to satisfy the information needs. Anyira (2021) stresses that Information policies are not mutually exclusive from library policies. He further stated that library policies are information policies refined to suit the library environment. They are information policies broken down into the different segments of information management such as collection development, cataloguing, circulation, reference service, serial management, etc. They help define the values of the library as an organisation, and they help librarians and other library staff translate those values into service priorities. These policies establish a standard for services that can be understood by library users and parent institutions. Anyira identifies library policies as follows: Collection development policy, cataloguing policy, circulation/lending policy, reference policy, serials/periodicals policy, document reproduction/ reprographic policy, and e-library policy.

Reference Service Policy

A reference policy defines the goals and philosophy of reference services in a Library. This policy also identifies for patrons the levels of services which the library provides, based on the resources available. Obi (2021) defined reference service as assistance to users to make them explore and exploit the library. She further stated that the attendant difficulty usually experienced by users in locating any information needed amidst the library stock of varied large volumes of resources gave rise to the reference service which is ' Answering Query'. In

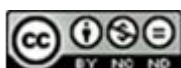
other words, the library helps the users', who basically must follow a laid down procedure, and if implemented will result in effective service delivery. The reference unit of the university library is the answering unit which provides a systematic and informed personal aid in interpreting library collections for study and research. Therefore, the reference unit is an essential unit for the survival of library services, hence needs well-stipulated guidelines for its services.

Burlington Library (2017) states that reference service aims to provide accurate, timely, impartial, and useful information and materials to meet the community's institutions', recreational and educational needs. All library staff is expected to be able to provide basic assistance to the users, including, searching for materials and placing reservations using the online library catalogue, using internet search engines to locate basic directory and encyclopaedic information, assisting library users in utilising library technologies, including computers, copiers, and other devices. The term "reference service," according to Akor and Alhassan (2015), amounts to direct personal assistance rendered to readers seeking information in the library. It is also defined as personal assistance provided to users in the pursuit of information, thus, for anyone who needs information no matter the subject, the first point of call should be the reference department of the library.

Similarly, Obi (2021) identified the following functions performed by reference librarians: Meeting the information and research needs of library users accurately, effectively, and pleasantly; Providing instructions to enable information seekers to become independent in their quest for and use of library resources; Allocating equal attention and effort to each query, regardless of the varying and readily available reference resources; Providing a formidable, approachable, and knowledgeable staff to assist the clientele; Creating, maintaining, and updating web pages with links to a variety of information relevant to the university community and its programs; Periodically evaluating user satisfaction with the reference services offered; Evaluating policies and procedures to strive for the best possible service delivery.

The implementation of reference policy and services rendered to the users faces several challenges toward the effective provision of reference services. Klumpp (2007) in his study discovered this problem library users are unnecessarily selfish in using library resources. Some users may tear pages from books, journals, and other information resources they consider most useful or steal a whole document. This attitude is disturbing to a conscious reference librarian or patrons who may want to use a piece of information in a document only to realise it cannot be found.

Zemengue (2021) maintains that most librarians working in the reference services lack professional skills because of a lack of training and do not have access to refresher courses and retraining. Poor information and communication technologies do not facilitate inter-library cooperation at the national, regional, and international levels. The lack of skill, low-speed Internet connection, and power failure further complicate the implementation of the reference policy. All the pointed issues, like lack of professional skill due to lack of periodic training, affect the effective implementation of the library reference policy. Anyim (2019) opines that major hindrances to the effective use of interpersonal communication in reference services include the inability to frame queries correctly, lack of adequate listening skills, stereotypes, and inferiority complex of librarians, and Anyim maintained that strategies for overcoming identified hindrances include carefully listening, right framing of reference queries and many more. Effective communication is important in implementing reference policy, the communicator and communicatee need to understand each other, for effective



assistance. Hence, for effective execution of reference policy, and efficient service delivery, careful listening and skill to develop the right reference queries become necessary.

Serials Management Policy

These are rules that govern the identification, selection, acquisition, and continuation of Serials/periodicals by the intellectual and informational needs of the library's constituency. Rashid (2023) maintained that selection policies for serial publications are guidelines that provide librarians with a framework for selecting and acquiring serial publications for their collections. Hope College (2020) maintained that in general serial selection policy, the primary criterion used to evaluate and select a serial subscription is the title's support of the educational program of the college. Serials selection policy according to Ashikuzzaman (2023) has determinant factors which include: Relevance to the library's mission and user needs, quality of content, and editorial standards: Serial publications should be evaluated based on the quality of their content, including the accuracy, depth, and scope of the information presented. The publication's editorial standards, such as peer review processes or editorial policies, may also be considered; Reputation and authority of the publisher - The reputation and authority of the publisher of the serial publication may be considered in evaluating its quality and relevance. Publishers with a strong reputation for producing high-quality publications may get greater consideration.

Frequency of publication and continuity - The frequency of publication and the likelihood of the publication's continuity should also be considered. Serial publications that are published regularly and have a history of consistent publication may be more valuable to the library's collection.

Format and availability - The format and availability of the serial publication may also be considered, including whether it is available in print or electronic format, and whether it is easily accessible to library users. Effective serials selection requires library management to organize regular staff training. Umoh et al. (2021) contend that university libraries should train librarians in business and negotiation skills. This enables them to acquire essential serial resources through improved acquisition methods.

Idachaba et al.'s (2021) study maintained that serials are published at regular intervals for instance daily, weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, bi-annually, and annually, and they contain current information. Newspapers, magazines, journals, and newsletters are all serials/periodicals. Ahiauzu (2007) maintains that journal articles and databases contain the most current information on any field of learning. She further stated that the need for libraries and information in the developmental effort of any society is the need for survival. Therefore, libraries should follow the established policy to acquire accurate and up-to-date serials resources to meet the information needs of its users.

The American Library Association (ALA) (1996) Sections I and II outline the Serial policy as follows: Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves; Materials should not be exempted because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation; Libraries should provide serial resources and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues; Information materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval; Access to library materials shall not be restricted because of age, race, religion, national origins, or social or political views.

Similarly, the University of North Dakota Chester Fritz Library (2023) on periodicals' collection development policy maintains that responsibility for the development of the library's periodical collection rests with the head of collection strategies and collection development committee; The primary purpose of a periodicals' collection development policy

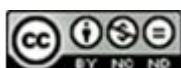
is to establish guidelines for the identification, selection, and continuation of periodicals by the intellectual and informational needs of the library's constituency; Factors used in the selection, continuation, and cancellation of titles include: relevance of the title to curriculum and research, demand for the title, perceived need for the title, cost, coverage (scope and content) of the title, accessibility (physical and electronic) of the title – including through interlibrary loan, and accessibility (bibliographical) to the title. Moreover, regarding, replacing, and cancelling periodical titles, the University of North Dakota Chester Fritz Library, further states that adding free serial titles—new serials that do not entail cost, whether in print, electronic, or other formats—must meet appropriate selection criteria; cancelling a periodical—a journal may be cancelled due to deficiencies in meeting the selection criteria; mandatory review of serial titles due to cost—limited ongoing resources available for serial purchases make it untenable to sustain excessive price increases in subscription costs.

Regarding problems associated with serials/periodicals policy, Mason (2007) contends that the problems faced by academic librarians to maintain their serials' collection presently include an explosion in academic research, budgetary cutback, lack of storage space, increase in price of academic publication, cost of binding and exchange rate. This problem grossly affects the effective implementation of serials/periodicals policy. Also, Idachaba et al. (2021) study revealed that serials are not well selected using selection tools like the ULRICH Serials directory to encourage PG research, the serial section is well stocked with assorted local and international journals and other serial materials to ease PG research, among others. It was also found that challenges like inadequate staff to attend to postgraduate students, the inability of some staff members to satisfy user information needs, mutilation of some serials, inadequate quality and current serials, and others are associated with serials management. The identified issues indicated the lack of effective use of serial policy. Increasingly, some libraries' are not adhering to the library serials policy.

Hampton-Reeves et al. (2009) stated that the use of journals in the Serials Section of the library is drastically reducing among undergraduates and postgraduates as they consistently resort to Google to save themselves the stress of going to the library. Online access to e-resources has recently become a challenge to the use of libraries. Another major constraint as noted by Mabawonkon and Aina (2005) includes the irregularity of journals published in Africa in various fields of knowledge. As maintained by Mason (2007), others include difficulty in maintaining subscriptions to all the journals that library users need and may want access to, which affects the availability and accessibility of serial resources. All these problems directly and indirectly affect the implementation of serials/periodicals policy.

Service Delivery

Tella et al (2020) describe library services as services the library provides to the users. This can include instructions on how to access and use library materials. The library services include circulation service, reference service, online reservation of books, recommendation of library material, current awareness service, interlibrary loan service, photocopying/printing service, orientation, and information sessions, selective dissemination of information, audiovisual service, and multimedia section. Similarly, Obi (2016) maintained that users' services: are the various services rendered to the library user directly, the services include lending materials, orientation, assisting the user, issuing guides, photocopying materials, and opening the library. providing seats, registration of the user, etc. All these services are geared toward meeting information user needs. Republic of Uganda Ministry of Local Government (2013) Refers service delivery to as a relationship between policymakers, service providers, and consumers of those services, and encompasses both services and their supporting systems.



Service delivery is a mechanism used by an organisation to meet the needs and aspirations of the people it is meant to serve. Thus, library service delivery is service rendered or provided to users by the library staff, to meet the users' information needs, and to achieve the goal of the library.

In this regard, the Uganda Ministry of Local Government (2013) further spells out the international principles guiding effective service delivery to include: *Availability* - A service should be available at the time and scale that the user needs it; *Dependability* - A service should be delivered regularly and on time; *Usability* - A service should be presented in user-specific formats so that the client can fully understand; *Usefulness* - A service should be designed to respond appropriately to user needs; *Credibility* - A service be designed in such a way that the user can confidently and conveniently apply it in solving his/her problem or need; *Authenticity* - A service should be delivered in such a way that entitles it to be accepted by stakeholders in given decision-making contexts; *Responsive and flexible* - A service should directly respond to the evolving user needs; *Sustainability* - A service should be affordable and consistent over time; *Expandability* - A service should apply to different kinds of approaches.

Sahabi and Ootobo (2021) maintained that some professional librarians do not have the technical expertise to serve libraries including technological efficiency such as the ability to communicate responsibly with appropriate technology, problem-solving, and access, manage, integrate, evaluate training, and create information to improve learning. Anyira (2011) opines that librarians who do not have advanced ICT skills cannot provide effective office services. Therefore, a lack of skills among librarians is a major impediment to providing effective library services to the users.

As Russell (2021) further postulates, one of the major challenges of service delivery is time management. You have limited time to keep working simultaneously on different projects. So, it is difficult for you to manage your time depending on one's needs. Service delivery requires working with others to provide a better service to clients. So, managing other people's work is one of the biggest challenges associated with service delivery. Also, poor coordination between different departments leads to poor service quality in an organization. So, this makes it one of the biggest challenges faced by those involved in service delivery.

Ebiwolate's (2010) study revealed numerous problems that bedevil libraries in Nigeria in their bid to provide effective services to information users. These challenges include inadequate funding, inadequate and outdated stock, lack of adequate and qualified staff, lack of staff motivation, and insecurity of library materials. In addition, Ebiwolate observed that lack of political will leads to negligence on the part of the government to fund the library properly; non-approval of the budget; and non-release or non-implementation of the budget (where approved). Inadequate funding has led to poor conditions of services, shortage of professional staff; poor human resource management; extremely dilapidated structures and facilities; obsolete resources; difficulty in extending services to the rural areas, and inadequate ICT facilities.

Furthermore, Aina (2004) posits that the services of libraries in Nigeria are grossly inadequate with outdated collections coupled with a lack of sufficient professional librarians. Understanding of the various academic library services by the users is poor, and poor attitude of workers in dealing with the users, there is every tendency that Inadequate funding and lack of sufficient professional librarians will result in poor service delivery in academic libraries.

Also, Sahabi and Ootobo (2021) in their study highlighted how lack of efficiency, technological inefficiency, and inadequate energy supplies constitute challenges to providing information services in the digital society. They maintain that librarians should strive to acquire ICT skills through personal training to be relevant and defend their profession. In

other words, effective services require periodic training. Tanawade (2011) states that many librarians lack self-reliance amidst growing information technology, which slows down service delivery and delays productivity.

Also, Adindu's (2021) study found a significant relationship between Internet service delivery and users' satisfaction in Federal University Libraries in South-South Nigeria, with users satisfied with library Internet services. Moreover, further efforts and finances from the parent institutions of these academic libraries are pivotal in maintaining or superseding the current delivery of Internet services in their libraries in response to what users desire in their libraries. Also, academic libraries should train and retrain staff members on the best ways of assisting library patrons in utilising Internet facilities. The provision of functional internet service needs an effective e-library policy to guide its activities toward efficient sustainability.

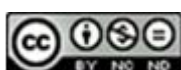
Emezie and Nwaohiri (2013) in their study stated that challenges to effective information services delivery in the 21st century include lack of competency, lack of technology literacy, poor internet connectivity, inadequate power supply, and poor funding. The use of paraprofessionals in the place of librarians will hinder effective library service delivery, the work of a librarian needs a professional librarian to perform it.

Empirical Literature Review

Reference Policy

Bukar et al. (2022) conducted a study on compliance with the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) digital reference service general guidelines by reference librarians in four selected federal university libraries in Northeast Nigeria. The study examined the extent to which librarians support the ideals of intellectual freedom and observe IFLA general guidelines on the behavioural performance of reference practitioners. The study used a descriptive survey on a study population comprised 2,882 postgraduate university students from which a 288 sample size was generated. The study used a questionnaire instrument for data collection. Frequency counts, percentages, and Chi-square were used for data analysis. The study found a minimum level of adherence to IFLA general guidelines. Moreover, its hypotheses tested signalled a significant relationship between the level of adherence to IFLA general guidelines on intellectual freedom and the specified response policy of librarians based on their universities. The study recommended strict enforcement of the use of standards in providing reference service delivery. The study is like the present study because both focus on library information policies in reference policy. Both studies used constructed questionnaires as instruments for data collection. However, the study reviewed employed a descriptive research design whereas the current study employed a correlational research design. In addition, the study reviewed had been carried out in four Federal Universities from Northeast Nigeria whereas the current study was conducted in eight federal universities' libraries in South-South Nigeria, with a population of 115 professional librarians' and used a 100 percent sample representation.

Umehali and Samuel's (2021) study focused on reference service delivery and students' satisfaction with the Abia State University Library. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with a population of 3,128 comprising 1,508 male and 1,620 female students, with a 313 sample size. The study used a questionnaire instrument for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis, and t-test for test of hypotheses. The findings revealed that reference services needed by students were made available and students were satisfied with some services even though they used the reference services to an extent. The study further revealed that reference service delivery needs to be



improved to give the students the satisfaction they need. The study recommended that university libraries should acquire current and relevant reference information and as well embrace new technology that will help in improving the reference service delivery to their students as this will also attract students to the use of reference services provided. The study compares to the present study because both focus on library information policies around reference service policy. Both studies used constructed questionnaires as instruments for data collection. However, the study reviewed employed a descriptive survey research design whereas the current study employed a correlational research design. The study reviewed was also carried out in Abia State University Library, with a total population of 3,128 students at the University, and 313 sample size, while the current study was carried out in eight federal universities' libraries in South-South Nigeria, with a population of 115 professional librarians' and uses the entire 115 professional librarians for the study.

Serials policy

Umoh et al.'s (2021) study of the collection development policy for library resources and users in university libraries in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria examined the effect of collection development policy on library resources and users in university libraries. The study used a descriptive survey and study population of 1,501 registered library users of the University of Calabar, Cross River State University of Technology, and the University of Uyo from which a sample size of 150 was drawn. The study used questionnaires as data collection instruments. The study used simple percentages for data analysis. It identified problems such as funding patterns, information explosion, and inflation as some variables affecting the smooth collection development policy in Nigeria's university libraries. As such, the study implored university libraries to train librarians in business and negotiation skills to enable them to understand the integrity of licensing and negotiation involved in the subscription of resources. Moreover, there should be an increase in the internet bandwidth to improve network access to resources regularly. Like the present study, both studies focus on library information policies in serials/periodicals collection development policy. Both studies also adopted constructed questionnaires as instruments for data collection. However, the study reviewed employed a descriptive research design which contrasts with the current study that employed a correlational research design. The study reviewed was conducted in university libraries in Nigeria's South-South geopolitical zone, focusing on registered library users whereas the current study covered eight federal universities' libraries in South-South Nigeria and concentrated on a population of 115 professional librarians, hence 100 percent inclusion.

Aghadiuno et al.'s (2015) research in two selected university libraries in the North-Central Zone of Nigeria examined the availability and management challenges of serials and other continuing resources. Using a descriptive survey and a study population of 11 serial librarians of the two universities under review, the study used questionnaires to collect requisite data. The study used percentages, mean scores, and frequency tables in analysing the data. The study found that the management challenges of serials ranged from outright theft of serial resources by users, mutilation of serials, disorganisation of serials, improper weeding of serials by the library, delay in the processing of new issues, delays in returning removed issues for repairs, illegal lending of serial resources to users. The study recommended that efforts be made to provide assisted serials resources like a generator/power plant, electricity supply, ICT manager, funds, website, good bandwidth, qualitative computer systems, and CD-ROMs, to increase the use of online in accessing serial and other continuing resources. The study is like the present research since both focus on library information policies in library serial management. Both studies adopted constructed questionnaires as instruments for data collection. Nevertheless, the study reviewed employed a descriptive research design as

opposed to a correlational research design in the current study. Moreover, the study reviewed focused on two North-Central Zone of Nigeria university libraries with a study population of 11 serial librarians; in contrast, the current study covers eight South-South Nigeria federal universities and 115 professional librarians.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design with a study population of 115 professional librarians from eight federal universities in South-South Nigeria. These federal universities are Otuoke, Bayelsa state (11); Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun, Delta state (11); Federal University of Technology, Akwa-Ibom (7); Nigerian Maritime University Okerenkoko, Delta State (15); University of Benin, Edo state (14); the University of Calabar, Cross Rivers state (15); University of Port Harcourt, Rivers state (15); and the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state (27). The sample size consisted of 115 professional librarians, which represents the entire population drawn using the census sampling method in line with Vedantu's (2023) recommendation. The census sampling method is suitable for investigating small samples and is more accurate and reliable. In its inquiry, the study employed a structured questionnaire for data collection with Likert 4-point scales. Data collected were analysed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlations (PPMC) to answer the research questions and test hypotheses. Whereas the hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The Statistical Package for Service Solutions (SPSS) was used to determine the accuracy of the analysis. Table 1 presents results on demographic characteristics:

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents

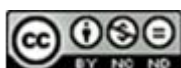
Items	Frequency
Male	44
Female	57
Total	101

Table 1 shows that out of 101 questionnaires retrieved, 44 were male respondents, and 57 were female. In other words, 14 did not respond to the questionnaire, hence a return rate of 87.8 percent. Also, the results show that most of the librarians under study were females. Pearson product-moment correlation (PPMC) was used to analyse the relationship between library reference service policy, serial management policy, and service delivery.

H1: There is no significant relationship between the library reference service policy and service delivery in federal universities in South-South Nigeria.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on Relationship between Library Reference Service Policy and Service Delivery in South-South Nigeria Varsities Correlations

S/N	Items	Library reference policy	Service Delivery
1	Library reference policy	Pearson Correlation	1 .376**



		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	101	101
2	Service Delivery	Pearson	.376**	1
		Correlation		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	101	101

** . The result is significant at $P < .05$ (2-tailed).

Table 2 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation result of library reference service policy and service delivery in federal universities in South-South Nigeria. The result revealed the R-value of .376 with its corresponding p-value of $.000 < 0.05$ level of significance. This indicates a moderate positive relationship between library reference service policy and service delivery in federal universities in South-South Nigeria. Moreover, the p-value of less than the chosen level of significance results in the rejection of the null hypothesis. Impliedly, there is a significant relationship between the library reference service policy and service delivery in federal universities in South-South Nigeria.

H2: There is no significant relationship between the library serials management policy and service delivery in South-South Nigeria federal universities.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between the library serials management policy and service delivery in South-South Nigeria Varsities Correlations

S/N	Items		Library serials policy	Service Delivery
1	Library serials policy	Pearson	1	.228**
		Correlation		
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.021
		N	101	101
2	Service Delivery	Pearson	.228**	1
		Correlation		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.021	
		N	101	101

** . The result is significant at $P < .05$ (2-tailed).

Table 3 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation result of library serials management policy and service delivery in federal universities in South-South Nigeria. The result indicates an R-value of .228 with its corresponding p-value of $.021 < 0.05$ level of significance. This indicates a moderate positive relationship between library serials management policy and service delivery in federal universities of South-South Nigeria. Again, the p-value is less than the chosen level of significance, hence invalidating the null hypothesis. Impliedly, there is a significant relationship between the library serials management policy and service delivery in federal universities of South-South Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Relationship between library reference service policy and service delivery

This study examined the relationship between library reference service policy and service delivery in federal universities in South-South Nigeria. The results for *H1* indicate a

significant relationship between reference service policy and service delivery. This finding is consistent with Bukar et al. (2022), who found a significant relationship between adherence to IFLA general guidelines on intellectual freedom and librarians' response policies. Similarly, Umebali and Samuel (2021) found that reference service delivery needs improvement to satisfy students' needs. In other words, existing reference service policies require enhancement to further promote service delivery and user satisfaction. Indeed, effective implementation of reference policy promotes library service delivery and addresses the issue of haphazard reference policy practices.

Relationship between Library Serials Management Policy and Service Delivery

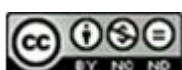
This study further investigated the relationship between library serials management policy and service delivery in federal universities in South-South Nigeria. The results for *H2* indicate a significant relationship between serials policy and service delivery. Consistent with this finding, Umoh et al. (2021) identified variables affecting collection development policy in Nigeria's university libraries, including funding patterns, information explosion, and inflation. Additionally, Aghadiuno et al. (2015) revealed management challenges of serials, such as theft, mutilation, and disorganisation. These findings collectively demonstrate a significant relationship between serials policy and service delivery. Furthermore, ineffective implementation of serials management policy, due to issues like funding patterns, information explosion, theft, mutilation, and disorganisation, can negatively impact service delivery in libraries.

Conclusion and Recommendations

A significant relationship exists between library reference service policy, serials management policy, and service delivery in South-South Nigeria's federal universities. Based on the study findings full attention ought to go toward the practice of reference service policy in a bid to enhance the quality of library services. Moreover, effective implementation of serials management policy requires proper steps to boost library service delivery. Given the significant relationship between reference service policy and service delivery, libraries should prioritise the effective implementation of reference service policies to boost service delivery even further. Also, considering the significant relationship between serials management policy and service delivery, library management should prioritise the acquisition of new journals in line with the serials management policy to meet the users' heightened and ever-changing information demands, thereby further enhancing quality library service delivery.

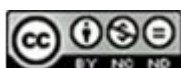
References

- Adindu, L. (2021). Internet services delivery and users' satisfaction in federal university libraries in south-south, Nigeria. *State University Journal of Education*, 24(1), 154-162.
- Aghadiuno, C. P., Agbo, A. D., & Onyekweodiri, N. E. (2015). Availability and management challenges of serials and other continuing resources in two selected university libraries in the North-central zone of Nigeria. *Journal of Applied Information Science and Technology*, 8(1), 55-61.



- Agoh, A. J., & Omekwu, C. O. (2021). Library and information services delivery and researchers' scholarly communication outputs in agricultural research institutes in North Central, Nigeria. *International Journal of Library and Information Science Studies*, 7(1), 9-24.
- Ahiauzu, B. (2007). Role of the library in geosciences education, petroleum exploration, and exploitation and research: A study of the Rivers State University of Science and Technology Library. *E-Journal of Science & Technology*. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280097585>
- Ahmadu Bello University. (2023). *Ahmadu Bello University library complex policy*. Retrieved from <https://library.abu.edu.ng/pages/goal.php>
- Aina, L. O. (2004). *Library and information science text for Africa*. Third World Information Services Limited.
- Akor, P. U., & Alhassan, J. A. (2015). Evaluation of reference services in academic libraries: A comparative analysis of three universities in Nigeria. *Journal of Balkan Libraries Union*, 3(1), 24-29.
- American Library Association. (1996). *Library Bill of Rights*. Retrieved from <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>
- Anyira, E. I. (2021). *Implementation of library and information policies in libraries in Delta state, Nigeria*. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/355717408>
- Anyira, E. I. (2011). One among the twelve: How library professionals constitute a serious challenge to the provision of library services in the 21st century. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 537. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/537/>
- Anyim, W. O. (2019). Improving reference services in federal university libraries in southeast Nigeria using interpersonal communication mechanism. *Review of Information Science and Technology*, 2(1), 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332423997>
- Ashikuzzaman, M. D. (2023). *Serials management in the library*. Retrieved from <https://www.lisedunetwork.com/serials-management-in-library/>
- Bukar, I., Namande, W., & Kimani, G. W. (2022). Compliance with IFLA digital reference service general guidelines by reference librarians in selected federal university libraries in Northeast Nigeria. *Journal of Applied Information Science and Technology*, 15(2). Retrieved from <https://www.academia.edu/100375667>
- Burlington Library. (2017). *Reference service policy*. Retrieved from <https://www.burlingtonlibrary.org/policies/reference-service-policy/>
- Case, D. O. (2010). A framework for information policies with examples from the United States. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*, 432. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/432>
- Chester Fritz Library. (2022). *Periodicals collection development policy*. Retrieved from <https://library.und.edu/about/periodicals.html>
- Dylla, D. (2023). *What are the four books in the library reference section?* Retrieved from <https://hccs.libanswers.com/faq/108136>
- Ebiwolate, P. B. (2010). Nigeria public services to rural areas: Public libraries in Niger State. *Library Philosophy and Practices (e-journal)*, 365. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl>
- Emezie, N. A., & Nwaohiri, N. M. (2013). 21st-century librarians and effective information service delivery. *Information Impact: Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, 4(1), 30-43.

- Enang, U., & Okwu, E. (2021). Library and information science policy formulation and implementation: Implications for school library services in Nigeria. *International Journal of Library and Information Science*, 13(1), 8-14.
- Hampton-Reeves, S., Mashiter, C., Westerway, J., Lumsden, P., Day, H., Howerston, H., & Hart, A. (2009). *Students' use of research content in teaching and learning*. Centre for Research-Informed Teaching, University of Lancaster.
- Hope College. (2020). *Serial policy*. Retrieved from <https://hope.edu/library/about-us/policies/collection-development/serials.html>
- Idachaba, J. A., Shidi, H., & Adekoya, O. M. (2021). State and challenges of serials management for postgraduate research in university libraries in north-central Nigeria. *Journal of Nigerian Library Association*.
- Klurnpp, J. F. (2007). *Reference service; students, instructors librarians in the 21st century*. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/referenceserviceaccessed>
- Mabawonkun, I. M., Aina, L. O., & Kigongo-Bukenya, I. M. N. (2005). Utilization of electronic information resources by academic staff at Makerere University. *University of Dar es Salaam Library Journal*, 6(1), 12-29.
- Mason, K. E. (2007). *Use of e-journals by academic staff and researchers at Loughborough University*. Retrieved from [http://www.Boro-ac-uk.library/about/PDFs/e-journal survey](http://www.Boro-ac-uk.library/about/PDFs/e-journal%20survey)
- Obi, B. B. (2016). Organizing resources and users' services in colleges of education libraries: An empirical appraisal. *New Era Research Journal of Human, Educational and Sustainable Development*, 9(1). Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/352244812>
- Obi, B. B. (2021). *Answering queries in the growing organism. Inaugural lecture series*, No. 30. Pearl Publishers International LTD. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354339468>
- Rashid, H. A. (2023). *Selection policies of serial publication in a library*. Retrieved from <https://limbd.org/selection-policies-of-serial-publication-in-a-library/>
- Republic of Uganda Ministry of Local Government. (2013). *Principles of service delivery in Uganda's local governments*. Handbook.
- Richard, T. (2015). *Introduction to the use of libraries for schools, colleges, polytechnics, and universities*. Ododo Printing and Publishing. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342303750>
- Russell, V. P. (2021). *What are the challenges of service delivery?* Retrieved from <https://www.vp-delivery.com/what-are-the-challenges-of-service-delivery/>
- Sahabi, M. K., & Otobo, E. E. (2021). Academic library and challenges of service delivery in Nigerian universities in the digital era. *Information Impact: Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, 12(2), 51-61.
- Tanawade, M. S. (2011). Effective interpersonal skills for library management. *Indian Streams Research Journal*, 1(1), 1-4.
- Tella, A., Quadri, F., Bamidele, S. S., & Ajiboye, O. O. (2020). *Resource sharing: Vehicle for effective library information dissemination and services in the digital age*. Retrieved from <https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/resource-sharing/233992>
- Umebali, C. O., & Samuel, N. C. (2021). Reference service delivery and students' satisfaction in Abia State University Library. *Jewel Journal of Librarianship*, 16(3).
- Umoh, M. S., Effiom, A. P., & Igaja, M. N. (2021). Collection development policy on library resources and users in university libraries in the South-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria. *Global Journal of Educational Research*, 20, 173-179.



- University of North Dakota Chester Fritz Library. (2023). *Periodicals collection development policy*. Retrieved from <https://library.und.edu/about/periodicals.html>
- Vedantu. (2023). *Census and sample survey*. Retrieved from <https://www.vedantu.com/commerce/census-and-sample-survey>
- Zemengue, J. (2021). Reference services in the libraries of the Republic of Cameroon: Current state, problems, and prospects. *Bibliosphere*, (3), 45-50. <https://doi.org/10.20913/1815-3186-2021-3-45-50>