

## Demographic Variables and Academic Librarians' Service Delivery in Selected Federal Universities and Polytechnics in Southwest, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

Academic libraries are important institutional organs because they provide users with high-quality, reliable, and timely information services. *Effective service delivery in academic libraries is dependent on several salient factors including those associated with librarians' personal characteristics. Thus, the study looks into the relationship between academic librarians' demographic factors and their service delivery in a number of federal polytechnics and universities in Southwest Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was used on 79 academic librarians from four (4) randomly selected academic libraries (two federal polytechnics and two federal universities) using total enumeration sampling. Data was collected using a self-structured questionnaire, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics via SPSS version 22.0. Major findings of the study revealed that academic librarians' demographic factors had little correlation with their service delivery, except for their educational qualification which did so at  $[r = 0.829]$ . This essentially means that academic librarians perform their tasks as expected, regardless of their demographic considerations. As a result, the study suggests that academic librarians should participate in additional activities like seminars, workshops, and other in-service training, as well as seek out opportunities to improve their education background. Such efforts would assist them in improving their service delivery without segregation, as their demographic characteristics (with the exception of their educational qualifications) failed to show considerable variance in their service delivery among others for which recommendations were made.*

**Keywords:** Demographic variables, Service Delivery, Academic Librarians, Libraries, Polytechnics and universities.

### INTRODUCTION

Demographic variables have long been acknowledged as important socio-economic elements of an organization's workforce that influence job performance and service delivery. The exploration of the general placement of persons in a social-economic sphere is the focus of demographic variables and research. Researchers are occasionally interested in learning more about how they affect organizational growth and development patterns.

In relation to organizational outcome, this includes occupational outcome and compensation, educational fulfillment or level,

family structure or size, and so on. It could entail looking into the size, structure, and movement of individual employees inside a business or institutional structure. Modern demographic studies take into account not just the population but also the temporal dimension and their impact on organizational productivity and service delivery outcome. In this context, demographic factors can be defined as the socio-economic characteristics of employees, such as age, educational attainment, gender, marital status, and years of service, as well as their link to organizational productivity or service output. Hassan and Ogunkoya (2014), as well as Oyewole and Popoola (2015), identified demographic characteristics such as education,

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gender, marital status, and years of service as having an impact on employees' job performance or service delivery based on this criteria. Personal traits such as gender, education, years of service or work experience, and marital status, among others, could be considered demographic variables in the workplace and their effects on organizational or institutional growth and development.

The quantitative individual traits of library and information professionals are alluded to by demographic parameters. Age, sex, training, job position or assignment, and long stretches of work comprehension are all quantitative factors. Regardless, while many studies have been conducted on librarian demographic factors, few evaluations have been conducted to experimentally establish the connection or interaction between information science professionals and library service delivery. Library professionals have a responsibility to provide numerous classes or categories of services to library patrons.

In the field of education and social sciences, however, attitudes, traits, educational qualifications, gender, age, professional experience, and other factors have been extensively studied to determine human behavior and interaction with others, as well as their effects on workplace productivity outcomes. However, in the available literature, the interactions of these crucial characteristics among librarians and their employment outcomes have not been thoroughly evaluated and established. As a result, it's possible that librarians' demographic characteristics have an impact on the services they provide. The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between academic librarians' gender, the section of the library where they work, their educational level, and their age, as well as their service delivery in federal universities and polytechnics in Nigeria's South-West.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main goal is to determine demographic factors and service delivery status of academic librarians in Southwest Nigerian institutions and polytechnics.

### RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the position of academic librarians in federal polytechnics and Universities in South-West Nigeria in terms of service delivery?

### HYPOTHESES

HO1: There is no statistically significant link between the gender of librarians and the degree (status) of service delivery.

HO2: There is no link between the department/section of work of librarians and the status of service delivery.

HO3: There is no link between the level of education of librarians and the quality of service they provide.

HO 4: Academic librarians' age has no bearing on the kind of service they provide.

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

According to Abadina and Mba (2014), demography is the study of people's general placement in a social and economic environment. This includes work and compensation, educational attainment or level, and family structure or size. In addition, it entails determining the number, structure, and movement of populations of people. They were aware that demographic factors (such as age, sexual orientation, educational foundation, culture, and wage or income level) play important roles in determining librarians' proficiency in providing library information services. They concluded that, in order to achieve maximum organizational performance, such organizations or enterprises should consider demographic issues of organizational personnel like librarians as seriously as other aspects of librarians' talents as a method of achieving intended service delivery outcome.

Demographics refer to the characteristics of a human population. It can also be thought of as measurable characteristics or elements of a population, such as age, gender, educational level, wage level, conjugal status, occupation, religion, birth rate, death rate, disabilities, mobility, normal family size, and marriage, among others. Gender refers to the socially classified hormones, characteristics that a given society considers appropriate for identifying people naturally; educational capabilities on the other hand, refer to the degrees, recognitions, declarations, and professional titles, among others, that an individual has obtained, whether through full-time study, part-time study, or private educational pursuit, whether within or outside the country of residence, and whether presented by educational experts or not. Age, on another other hand, refers to the length of one's

existence or the terms of one's life (World Health Organization, 2018). It is considered that librarians with typical professional backgrounds and appropriate training have a greater understanding of technical advancements, developments in library automation, and information and communication technologies, as well as their utility in providing services to clients (Bhoi, 2017). As a result, his research concludes that librarians with adequate demographic traits, such as a high level of professional experience and the necessary education, are more likely to provide quality services to library patrons. In this situation, they must be more computer literate, allowing them to easily navigate the Internet for relevant material to suit users' information needs. The amount of education of librarians helps to lessen their ignorance. The more educated they are, the better equipped they are to deal with the job's stressors, and the easier it is for them to create appropriate coping techniques. In the library environment, educational competence is also a significant aspect in providing services to patrons. A well-educated librarian will be aware of new societal trends and will want to gain access to them in order to provide users with suitable and current information services (Crimmins, 2015).

Furthermore, library and information specialists with a more enviable or higher educational level would generally aim to update their information gathering skills and job approach, which may surely be a prelude to the provision of high-quality library services. According to Shera (1972), the best technique by which librarians generated access to information was discovered to promote the highest educational level of librarians. The author suggested that a well-educated librarian and information professional is less likely to hoard information because they have previously prepared themselves intellectually and are more willing to share the knowledge they have gained throughout their years of study. Ifidon (1997) supports the writer's point of view, arguing that specific competences, such as subject knowledge based on academic and professional qualifications in the discipline, must be demanded of librarians in order for them to efficiently deliver the services expected of them in libraries.

Age has a substantial influence on withdrawing cognition of librarians in the 20-30 year age band, according to studies. This group was more likely to leave the library profession and join

other organizations. This means that older librarians are less likely to leave the profession than younger ones thereby having the willingness to be committed to quality service delivery practices. Because withdrawal cognition is linked to discontent, younger librarians are more likely to be unsatisfied with their jobs and seek other opportunities and therefore behave otherwise in their service delivery functions. In other words, a disgruntled librarian is more likely to have a bad attitude towards library services. Moreover, desirable or positive features of a librarian, on the other hand, may have no age restriction (Van der Walt, 2010).

Some other scholars have discovered that age has a direct impact on the services rendered by librarians. They disclosed that younger librarians are more dedicated than older librarians, yet senior librarians have accumulated more knowledge and expertise in offering clients more satisfactory information services (Oyintola, Salman, Florence & Abdsalam, 2014). They mentioned that many younger librarians express dissatisfaction with their workload; for example, a younger librarian may express dissatisfaction with how to cope with the library environment which could make it difficult for him or her to satisfy patrons, whereas an older librarian may act differently better towards improving library services to users (Oyintola, Salman, Florence & Abdsalam, 2014). In terms of employment, cognate experience, or the number of years a person has worked in a similar profession, plays a critical part in his employment responsibilities. According to Emezie and Nwaohiri (2013), service delivery is currently a problem in libraries and among librarians in the following areas: lack of competency, as some library and information professionals in Nigeria are unprepared to take on tough tasks of providing information services. They despise innovation and regard the use of personal computers for library purposes as an outlier. Because of this, they are unwilling to recognize the need for new innovation among librarians which in most cases are due to personal characteristics or demographic variables, despite the fact that information innovation is growing and becoming inevitable. This reduces the amount of information provided and processed by libraries, as well as the public's impression of them. Furthermore, lack of fundamental abilities in the use of information technology has resulted in

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dissatisfaction among library users, who are now ICT savvy and expect more from librarians. Librarians without well-developed ICT expertise cannot provide compelling library administrations, so the lack of skills among library and information professionals creates a significant snag in supporting effective service provision to users in libraries (Emezie & Nwaohiri, 2013). The gender of librarian have been identified in available literature as an important consideration when assessing proper service delivery.

On the subject of service delivery, it is clear that there is a significant difference between male and female librarians. Male librarians are more satisfied at work than female librarians especially among married female librarians, particularly nursing mothers, who may not have the time to package and distribute knowledge to patrons. Academic librarians have several responsibilities, which may prevent female

### Number of Academic Librarians at the Institution

Name of Institution	No of Academic Librarians
University of Lagos	18
University of Ibadan	28
Yaba College of Technology, Yaba	22
Federal Polytechnic, Ado Ekiti	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>

Because of its tiny size, this study used the total enumeration approach or census sample size. A questionnaire that was created by the researcher was utilized to collect data. Complete data was collected from 56 respondents, reflecting a return rate of 70.89 percent, and was judged to be useful for the study. To answer the study research question, data were analyzed using statistical mean, frequency count, and

librarians from producing and presenting enough journals for promotion thereby impeding their motivation to be engaged in effective service delivery to users. As a result most patrons prefer to seek information from male librarians because they are more tolerant of and knowledgeable about internet use and access than their female counterparts (Emezie & Nwaohiri, 2013). Moreover, it was disclosed that female librarians have more troubles obtaining information on the internet thereby retarding their service delivery potentials in libraries (Sumeer, Tariq, Samir, Rabiya, & Ikrah, 2016).

### METHODS

The descriptive survey research design was used in this study. The study's participants include 79 academic librarians from four academic libraries in Nigeria's south-west (two university and two polytechnic libraries), as indicated below.

percentages, while PPMC was utilized to test the study hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance via SPSS version 20.

### Research Question

What is the position of academic librarians in federal polytechnics and universities in South-West Nigeria in terms of service delivery?

**Table1.** Showing the descriptive analysis of academic librarians' service delivery status (N = 56)

S/N	Service Delivery Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Always ready to answer users' query (Consultancy services)	16	28	10	2	3.23	0.789	Accept
		28.6	50	17.9	3.6			
2	Regularly engage in current awareness Services to users	8	8	24	16	2.43	0.433	Reject
		14.3	14.3	42.9	28.6			
3	Selective dissemination of information to users (SDI services)	6	5	28	17	2.33	0.403	Reject
		10.7	8.9	50	30.4			
4	Involvement in inter-library loan services to users	7	3	20	26	2.14	0.334	Reject
		12.5	5.4	35.7	46.4			
5	User education/orientation services	26	24	2	4	3.08	0.714	Accept
		46.4	42.9	3.6	7.1			
6	Reference services to library users	20	23	9	4	3.23	0.788	Accept
		35.7	41.1	16.1	7.1			
7	Users registration & lending services	22	23	6	5	3.41	0.847	Accept
		39.3	41.1	10.7	8.9			
8	Assist users with photocopying services	20	19	10	7	3.87	0.901	Accept

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	when the need arises	35.7	33.9	17.9	12.5			
9	Bindery services assistance to users when the need arises	22	18	14	2	3.31	0.778	Accept
		39.3	32.1	25	3.6			
10	Helping to connect users to library internet services	6	8	22	20	2.22	0.232	Reject
		10.7	14.3	39.3	35.7			
11	Assist users in downloading materials from the internet when in need	11	14	20	11	2.75	0.654	Accept
		19.6	25	35.7	19.6			
12	Engaging in library use promotional services (Library marketing)	4	13	37	2	2.03	0.247	Reject
		7.1	23.2	66.1	3.6			
<b>Cluster Mean (Overall Mean)</b>						<b>2.836</b>	<b>0.593</b>	

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The mean evaluations of academic librarians' service performance are shown in Table 1. The mean ratings for items 1 through 12 are 3.23, 2.43, 2.33, 2.14, 3.08, 3.23, 3.41, 3.87, 3.31, 2.22, 2.75, and 2.03 with standard deviations of 0.789, 0.433, 0.334, 0.714, 0.788, 0.847, 0.901, 0.778, 0.232, 0.654, and 0.247, respectively. The rated items 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 11 were acceptable based on the cut-off point of 2.50 because it is a four-likert scale, indicating that librarians are always ready to answer users' queries (consultancy services), provide user education/orientation services to enable users to make effective use of library resources, always render reference services to library patrons, and provide good circulation services to patrons such as user registration and lending services. Respondents were also discovered to assist users with photocopying services when needed, as

well as provide bindery services when needed, and aid users with downloading materials from the internet when needed. Item 2, 3, 4, 10, and 12 were all rejected, indicating that respondents do not provide current awareness services to users on a regular basis, do not provide selective dissemination of information to users (SDI services), and do not have a strong interest in providing inter-library loan services to users. They also don't contribute significantly to linking people to the library's internet service or to library promotional services (Library marketing).

### Hypotheses Testing

HO1: There is no statistically significant link between the gender of librarians and the degree (status) of service delivery.

Table 2. PPMC Relationship between Gender and Service Delivery (SD).

		Gender	SD
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	.354
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.216
	N	56	56
SD	Pearson Correlation	.354	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.216	
	N	56	56

Source: Authors SPSS Version 22.0 Output

Where  $r = \text{Pearson correlation} = 0.354$

### Interpretation

Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to evaluate the association between gender and service delivery. The two variables had no significant link [ $r = 0.354$ ,  $n = 56$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ], with no significant level of gender associated with service delivery. We fail to reject the null hypothesis because the correlation between

gender and service delivery ( $r = 0.354$ ) is not significant at the 0.05 level ( $H_0$ ). This means that the gender of academic librarians has no bearing on the services they provide.

HO2: There is no link between the department/section of work of librarians and the status of service delivery.

Table 3. PPMC Relationship between Librarians' Section and Service Delivery

		Librarians'	SD
Librarians'	Pearson Correlation	1	.543
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.271
	N	56	56

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SD	Pearson Correlation	.543	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.271	
	N	56	56

Where  $r$  = Pearson correlation = **0.543**

### Interpretation

Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to analyze the association between the librarians' section and service delivery. The two variables have a substantial positive connection [ $r = 0.543$ ,  $n = 56$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ]. Indeed, the association between librarians' section and service delivery ( $r = 0.543$ ) is not significant at the 0.05 level,

hence the null hypothesis is not rejected ( $H_0$ ). This means that the service department or area of work of academic librarians has no bearing on the services they provide.

HO3: There is no link between the level of education of librarians and the quality of service they provide.

**Table4.** PPMC Relationship between Educational Level and Service Delivery

		<b>Educational level</b>	<b>SD</b>
Educational level	Pearson Correlation	1	.829
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	56	56
SD	Pearson Correlation	.829	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	56	56

Source: Authors SPSS (22.0) Output

Where  $r$  = Pearson correlation = 0.829

### Interpretation

Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to explore the association between educational level and service delivery. The two variables had a substantial positive connection [ $r = 0.829$ ,  $n = 56$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ], with a considerable level of educational background (level) related with service delivery. Furthermore, the correlation ( $r = 0.829$ ) between educational level and service

delivery is not significant at the 0.05 level, hence the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is a link between academic librarians' educational level and the services they provide.

HO 4: Academic librarians' age has no bearing on the kind of service they provide.

**Table5.** PPMC Relationship between Age and Service Delivery

		<b>Age</b>	<b>SD</b>
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	.414
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.211
	N	56	56
SD	Pearson Correlation	.414	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.211	
	N	56	56

Source: Authors SPSS Version 22.0 Output

Where  $r$  = Pearson correlation = 0.414

### Interpretation

Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to evaluate the association between age and service delivery.

There was no significant positive association between the two variables [ $r = 0.414$ ,  $n = 56$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ], and age was not connected with service delivery at any level. The association between educational level and service delivery ( $r =$

0.414) is not significant at the 0.05 level, hence the null hypothesis is not rejected ( $H_0$ ). This implies that academic librarians' service delivery is not determined by their age.

## THE RESULTS ARE DISCUSSED

The research looked at demographics, librarian knowledge of information ethics, and service delivery. These demographic variables (gender, librarians' department or section of work,

librarians' level of education and service delivery, librarians' age and service delivery) were found to be ineffective in predicting librarian service delivery in this study, which is in contrast to Whitmire (2001), who found a link between background characteristics such as race, gender, critical thinking ability, and information ethics use among academic librarians. As a result, demographic factors have no bearing on academic librarians' service delivery in higher institutions. This means that academic librarians' personal characteristics have no bearing on how they provide information services to users.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study concluded that academic librarians' demographic factors have no bearing on their service delivery, with the exception of their educational levels. Gender, the department or section where academic librarians are posted or working, and age of academic librarians have no significant influence on the services they provide to library users, according to the study, except for their educational qualification, which has a significant influence on their service delivery at  $[r = 0.829]$  or 82.9 percent. As a result, the study suggests that demographic characteristics are not a significant or general predictor of academic librarians' service delivery status.

As a result of this finding, the study suggests that:

- Librarians at the surveyed tertiary institutions should participate in additional activities such as seminars, workshops, and other in-service trainings, as well as possibilities for librarians to advance their educational careers when the need arises. This will also aid in the advancement of their service delivery without segregation, as their demographic characteristics reveal no variation in service delivery.
- Despite the fact that there was no difference in the demographic variables of librarians' service delivery, it is expected that there will be progress in order to achieve an excellent level of service delivery. As a result, organizations in charge of librarians' affairs, such as the Nigerian Library Associations, and regulatory bodies, such as the Librarian Registration Council, should develop policies that include rewards and punishments to encourage librarians to adhere to the high-

quality service delivery standards often promoted by regulatory bodies, without gender segregation or inequality.

- Librarians have not yet achieved complete service delivery excellence. Thus, all stakeholders with a direct relationship to the librarianship profession, such as academic librarians, library management, local and national library organizations, regulatory bodies, and other government agencies, should ensure that rules guiding quality service delivery adherence are followed and enforced in order to improve the level of service delivery among librarians in general.

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