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STAFF MANAGEMENT VARIABLES AS CORRELATES OF EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY AMONG LIBRARIANS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated staff management variables as correlate to effective service delivery by librarians in federal universities in South-South Nigeria. The research work was guided by three hypotheses. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 117 librarians across the eight federal universities in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The sample size for the study was 117 librarians, and the sampling technique used was the census sampling technique. Data for the study were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire and analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The study found that there was a significant and strong positive relationship between staff retirement policies and effective service delivery, staff funding policies and effective service delivery, and staff performance evaluation policies and effective service delivery. The findings indicate that well-structured retirement policies, adequate funding of staff-related activities, and regular and transparent performance evaluation are important factors associated with effective service delivery by librarians in federal universities. Based on the findings, it was recommended that university management should strengthen the implementation of staff retirement policies, provide adequate and regular funding for staff development and welfare, and institutionalize fair and transparent performance evaluation systems to enhance librarians' motivation, productivity and effective service delivery.

Keyword: staff management variables, staff retirement policies, staff funding, staff performance evaluation, staff, effective service delivery

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Introduction

Staff management constitutes an important aspect of organisational administration because the effectiveness of any institution depends substantially on how its employees are recruited, supported, developed, evaluated and retained. In university libraries, staff management is particularly significant because librarians constitute the human resources responsible for organising information resources, providing reference and research assistance, supporting user education, facilitating access to electronic information and responding to the changing information needs of academic communities. Consequently, appropriate staff management practices are required to create conditions that enable librarians to perform their responsibilities effectively. Among the staff management factors that may shape librarians' effectiveness are retirement policies, staff funding and performance evaluation. The manner in which these variables are planned and implemented can influence staff motivation, continuity, professional capacity and productivity, with possible implications for the quality of services provided to library users (Green & Watson, 2020; Davies & Brown, 2022).

Staff retirement policies represent an important dimension of staff management because they provide guidelines for managing employees' transition from active service to retirement. In university libraries, retirement policies have implications for workforce planning, succession, knowledge transfer and continuity of library operations. Experienced librarians often possess specialised professional knowledge and institutional experience

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that may be difficult to replace immediately when they leave the service (Anyaegbu & Wali, 2021). Appropriate retirement planning can therefore assist library management in anticipating staff exits, preparing replacements and facilitating the transfer of relevant knowledge and responsibilities to other personnel. Conversely, weaknesses in retirement planning may create gaps in staffing and expertise, particularly where replacements are not provided in a timely manner. Such gaps may affect the capacity of librarians to sustain regular information, reference, research and user-support services. The implementation of retirement policies may therefore be relevant to understanding variations in effective service delivery among librarians.

Staff funding is another important staff management variable in university libraries. Librarians require financial support to participate in continuing professional development, conferences, workshops, seminars and other activities through which they acquire new knowledge and competencies. Funding is also necessary for maintaining the technological and material conditions within which librarians perform their duties, particularly as academic library services increasingly involve electronic resources, digital platforms, automated systems and online research support. Inadequate financial provision may limit opportunities for professional growth and restrict the ability of librarians to respond effectively to emerging information demands. On the other hand, adequate and appropriately managed funding can provide librarians with opportunities to update their skills and operate within an environment that supports efficient service provision. The

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availability and management of staff-related funding may consequently have implications for the effectiveness of services delivered in federal university libraries.

Performance evaluation constitutes a further dimension of staff management that may be associated with effective library service delivery. It involves the systematic assessment of employees' work performance against established responsibilities, standards and organisational expectations. In university libraries, evaluation may cover areas such as job knowledge, productivity, information service provision, user relations, teamwork, adaptability, research support and the application of information and communication technologies. A properly implemented evaluation process can provide information about librarians' strengths, identify areas where improvement is required and inform decisions concerning training, promotion, recognition and other forms of professional development. Where evaluation procedures are transparent, objective and consistently applied, librarians may have clearer expectations regarding their responsibilities and performance standards. Performance evaluation can therefore serve as a mechanism through which library management identifies and addresses factors that may influence the quality and effectiveness of services provided to users.

Effective service delivery is the ultimate concern of these staff management practices because academic libraries are expected to provide timely, accessible, relevant and user-oriented services that support the teaching, learning and research functions of their parent universities (Hundo, 2025). The effectiveness of librarians' service delivery

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may be reflected in their ability to provide appropriate information resources, respond promptly to users' enquiries, support research activities, provide user education, facilitate access to electronic resources and employ appropriate technologies in meeting information needs. However, the ability of librarians to perform these responsibilities may depend partly on the organisational conditions under which they work. Retirement arrangements that support continuity, funding that facilitates staff development and work-related activities, and evaluation systems that promote accountability and improvement may each contribute to an environment in which librarians can perform their responsibilities more effectively.

The relevance of these staff management variables becomes particularly important in federal universities in South-South Nigeria, where university libraries serve diverse populations of students, lecturers, researchers and other academic users. The changing nature of scholarly communication, increasing dependence on electronic information resources and growing expectations for technology-mediated library services require librarians to maintain appropriate professional competencies and organisational support. At the same time, staff exits, financial constraints and the need to assess employee performance present continuing management concerns. These circumstances make it necessary to examine whether variations in retirement policies, staff funding and performance evaluation are associated with differences in the effectiveness of service delivery by librarians.

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Although each of these variables represents a distinct aspect of staff management, they collectively provide a basis for examining how organisational arrangements surrounding librarians may relate to their capacity to deliver effective services. Retirement policies concern continuity and workforce transition; staff funding concerns the financial support available for personnel and their professional activities; while performance evaluation concerns the assessment and improvement of employees' contributions. Examining their relationships with effective service delivery can provide empirical evidence that may assist library administrators in understanding the staff management conditions associated with service effectiveness. It is against this background that this study investigates staff management variables as correlates of effective service delivery among librarians in federal universities in South-South Nigeria, with specific attention to staff retirement policies, staff funding and staff performance evaluation.

Statement of Problem

Despite the importance of retirement policies, staff funding and performance evaluation to human resource management, the extent to which these factors relate to effective service delivery by librarians in federal universities in South-South Nigeria requires empirical attention. Inadequate retirement arrangements may affect succession and continuity; insufficient funding may constrain staff development and library operations; while ineffective performance evaluation may limit the identification and improvement of librarians' competencies. Since librarians are central to the provision of

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academic library services, understanding the relationships between these staff-related factors and effective service delivery is necessary for improving library management and service outcomes. The study therefore investigates the relationships between staff retirement policies, staff funding, staff performance evaluation and effective service delivery by librarians in federal universities in South-South Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance**:**

$H_0$1: There is no significant relationship between staff retirement policies and effective service delivery by librarians in federal universities in South-South Nigeria.

$H_0$2: There is no significant relationship between staff funding and effective service delivery by librarians in federal universities in South-South Nigeria.

$H_0$3: There is no significant relationship between staff performance evaluation and effective service delivery by librarians in federal universities in South-South Nigeria.

Literature Review

Staff retirement policies provide guidelines for the orderly exit of employees from active service and can contribute to continuity of library operations. Effective retirement policies may provide for clear retirement conditions, benefits, knowledge transfer and succession planning. Jongur (2018) observed that retirement policies provide guidelines

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that facilitate smooth employee transition and continuity of service. Dali (2022) similarly noted that retirement benefits recognise employees' years of service and may motivate them to remain committed to quality service until retirement. In addition, succession planning can reduce knowledge gaps and service disruption resulting from the retirement of experienced librarians. Calabro et al. (2018) emphasised that identifying and preparing successors for key positions promotes workforce continuity.

Empirically, Udo-Anyanwu and Echem (2022) examined the socioeconomic retirement plans of 78 library and information science professionals in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Using a census survey and questionnaire, the study found that age and length of service influenced retirement decisions. The researchers recommended that employees should be adequately informed about retirement requirements from recruitment. Although the study focused on retirement plans rather than service delivery, it provides relevant evidence on retirement arrangements among library professionals. The present study extends the literature by examining the relationship between staff retirement policies and effective service delivery by librarians in federal universities in South-South Nigeria.

Funding is fundamental to the effective operation of university libraries because it supports the acquisition of information resources, infrastructure, technology and staff development. Eyo and Bassey (2021) noted that adequate financial resources are necessary for libraries to perform their functions effectively, while Gwang (2017) observed that funding supports the acquisition of information resources, infrastructure, recruitment and

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training of staff. Adequate funding can therefore strengthen librarians' capacity to provide reference, information literacy, research support and technology-based services. Conversely, inadequate funding may result in insufficient resources, poor infrastructure and limited professional development, thereby constraining service delivery.

Onuoha and Chukwueke (2020) investigated additional income-generation patterns for addressing poor funding in Nigerian academic libraries, using MOUAU Library as a case study. The study involved 56 library workers selected through census sampling and found that the statutory 10% NUC allocation was the major source of library income. The researchers recommended additional income-generation strategies for academic libraries. Although the study concentrated on funding sources rather than service delivery, it demonstrates the importance of financial resources to the functioning of academic libraries. The present study focuses specifically on the relationship between staff funding and effective service delivery by librarians in federal universities in South-South Nigeria.

Performance evaluation provides a systematic means of assessing librarians' knowledge, skills, productivity, attitudes and effectiveness in performing assigned responsibilities. Omotunde and Alegbeleye (2021) emphasised that performance reviews help determine whether librarians meet job requirements and contribute to library objectives. Performance evaluation can also provide a basis for identifying training needs, recognising good performance and making decisions concerning promotion and professional development. Kaya et al. (2019) recommended the use of multiple approaches,

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including self-assessment, peer review and supervisor evaluation, to obtain a comprehensive assessment of employee performance.

Performance evaluation is particularly relevant to service delivery because it identifies areas in which librarians need improvement and encourages continuous professional development. Wiśniewska and Grudowski (2024) noted that performance evaluation can promote a culture of excellence and continuous improvement by encouraging employees to enhance their work practices. In university libraries, evaluating librarians' effectiveness in information dissemination, reference services, research support, resource management and use of emerging technologies can help ensure that services remain responsive to users' needs. Thus, an effective performance evaluation policy may contribute to improved librarian productivity and effective service delivery. The present study therefore examines the relationship between staff performance evaluation and effective service delivery by librarians in federal universities in South-South Nigeria

Methodology

A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The choice of correlational research design was considered appropriate because the study sought to determine the relationship between staff development policies and effective service delivery by librarians without manipulating any of the variables under investigation. The population of the study comprised 117 librarians across the eight federal universities in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The population covered librarians working in the

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selected federal universities and constituted the target respondents for the study. Since the population was relatively small and manageable, the researcher adopted a census sampling technique. Thus, all the 117 librarians in the population were included in the study, making the sample size 117 librarians. The use of the census sampling technique ensured that every librarian in the identified population had the opportunity to participate in the study and eliminated the need to select a smaller representative sample from the population. Data for the study were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire titled Staff Development Policies and Effective Service Delivery by Librarians in Federal Universities in South-South Nigeria (SDPAESDLFUSN). The questionnaire was developed based on the objectives and research questions of the study and was structured to obtain relevant information from the respondents concerning staff development policies and effective service delivery. The researcher administered the questionnaire to the 117 librarians included in the study from which 105 copies were found valid for analyses. The questionnaires were distributed directly to the respondents, with appropriate assistance where necessary to explain the purpose of the study and the procedure for completing the instrument. Respondents were allowed adequate time to complete the questionnaire, after which the completed copies were retrieved for analysis. The researcher ensured that participation was voluntary and that the information supplied by respondents was treated confidentially and used strictly for academic purposes. Data collected from the respondents were coded, organised and analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Pearson Product Moment Correlation was considered appropriate

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because the study sought to determine the relationship between staff development policies and effective service delivery by librarians.

Results and Discussion

H_{01}: There is no significant correlation between effective service delivery by librarians in federal university libraries in the South-South and staff retirement policies Nigeria.

Table: Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) analysis of the relationship between staff retirement policies and effective service delivery

		Staff retirement Policies	Service Delivery
Staff retirement Policies	Pearson Correlation	1	0.864**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.002
	N	105	105
Service delivery	Pearson Correlation	0.864**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	
	N	105	105

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 shows the testing of the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between staff retirement policies and effective service delivery. A correlation coefficient of r = 0.864 was found between effective service delivery and staff retirement policies in federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria, indicating a very strong positive relationship between the two concepts. Therefore, there is a very strong positive relationship between staff retirement policies and effective service delivery in the federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no

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significant relationship between staff retirement policies and effective service delivery in the federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria is supported by the relationship coefficient r = 0.864 with Sig. of 0.002. rejected.

H_{02}: There in federal university libraries in the South-South, there is no significant correlation between staff funding policy and efficient service delivery by librarians. Nigeria.

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) analysis of the relationship between staff funding policy and effective service delivery

		Staff funding policy	Service Delivery
Staff funding policy	Pearson Correlation	1	0.771**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.004
	N	105	105
Service delivery	Pearson Correlation	0.771**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004	
	N	105	105

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 shows the testing of the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between staff funding policy and effective service delivery. A correlation coefficient of r = 0.771 was found between the federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria's staff funding policy and efficient service delivery, indicating a strong positive correlation. As a result, effective service delivery in federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria is strongly correlated with staff funding policy. The relationship coefficient r = 0.771 with Sig.

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of 0.004 is statistically significant at 0.01 (r = 0.771, P = 0.01 > 0.004), therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between staff funding policy and effective service delivery in the federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria is rejected.

H03: In federal university libraries in the South-South, there is no significant correlation between effective service delivery by librarians and performance evaluation policy Nigeria.

Table 3: Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) analysis of the relationship between performance evaluation policy and effective service delivery

		Performance evaluation policy	Service Delivery
Performance evaluation policy	Pearson Correlation	1	0.832**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.002
	N	105	105
Service delivery	Pearson Correlation	0.832**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	
	N	105	105

Table 3 demonstrates the testing of the hypothesis that there is no significant connection between effective service delivery and performance evaluation policy. The relationship between performance evaluation policy and effective service delivery in the federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria obtained a correlation coefficient of r = 0.832, indicating a very strong positive relationship between the two constructs.

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Therefore, there is a very strong positive relationship between performance evaluation policy and effective service delivery in the federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria. The null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between effective service delivery in the federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria and performance evaluation policy is supported by the relationship coefficient of r = 0.832 with Sig. of 0.002. rejected.

Discussion of the Findings

Staff Retirement Policies and Effective Service Delivery

The study found a significant and strong positive relationship between staff retirement policies and effective service delivery by librarians in federal universities in South-South Nigeria, with a correlation coefficient of r = 0.864. This finding indicates that well-structured and adequately implemented retirement policies are associated with improved service delivery. Effective retirement policies can contribute to staff motivation, job satisfaction and commitment by providing librarians with confidence about their welfare and future after active service. They may also facilitate proper succession planning, knowledge transfer and timely replacement of retiring staff, thereby reducing disruptions to library operations. This finding is consistent with Okeke (2021), whose study revealed that effective succession policies help to minimize knowledge loss and sustain staff productivity following retirement. Similarly, Nwosu (2019) found that institutions with

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clear and adequately funded retirement policies were better able to retain experienced professionals and ensure the continuity of their contributions to institutional service delivery. The agreement between these studies and the present finding suggests that retirement policies are not merely welfare provisions but important human resource management mechanisms that can support continuity, motivation and effective library service delivery.

Staff Funding Policies and Effective Service Delivery

The findings also revealed a significant and strong positive relationship between staff funding policies and effective service delivery, with a correlation coefficient of r = 0.771. This finding suggests that adequate and consistent funding of staff-related activities is associated with improved service delivery by librarians. Adequate funding enables university libraries to support staff recruitment, training and development, promotion, welfare and retirement obligations, while also providing opportunities for librarians to acquire new knowledge and skills required to respond effectively to changing user needs. The finding of Achieng (2019), whose study showed that sound financial policies for staff development contributed to improved library services and user satisfaction is in line with the study of Nnodim and Umunna (2026). Similarly, Anthony (2020) found that although research institutes were extensively utilized, inadequate funding by their parent institutions hindered the effective dissemination of research information to users. Ogundele (2018) also reported that inadequate funding constrains human resource

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development and limits access to essential library resources. The consistency of these findings indicates that appropriate staff funding is an important factor in sustaining motivated and competent library personnel and, consequently, improving the quality and effectiveness of services provided to library users.

Staff Performance Evaluation Policies and Effective Service Delivery

The study further established a significant and strong positive relationship between staff performance evaluation policies and effective service delivery, with a correlation coefficient of r = 0.832. This finding implies that effective, regular and transparent staff performance evaluation is associated with improved service delivery among librarians. Performance evaluation provides an avenue for identifying strengths and weaknesses in staff performance, clarifying job expectations, recognizing accomplishments and identifying areas requiring further training and development. When conducted fairly and transparently, performance evaluation can also motivate librarians to improve their productivity and commitment to their responsibilities. This finding is consistent with Anyim (2020), who reported that effective performance management facilitates job performance by helping librarians understand their responsibilities and encouraging positive attitudes towards work. Similarly, Okafor (2019) found that performance evaluation positively influenced staff motivation and productivity. The agreement between the present study and these previous studies suggests that performance evaluation policies

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can serve as an important mechanism for improving staff accountability, motivation and professional effectiveness, thereby contributing to more effective library service delivery.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. University management should strengthen and effectively implement staff retirement policies by ensuring timely processing of retirement benefits, providing adequate pre-retirement support, and establishing clear succession and knowledge-transfer mechanisms. This will help motivate librarians, reduce disruptions associated with staff retirement and ensure continuity of library services.
2. Federal universities should provide adequate and regular funding for staff-related activities in their libraries, particularly recruitment, training and development, promotion, welfare and other professional development programmes. Adequate funding will enable librarians to acquire relevant skills and competencies needed to provide efficient and quality services to library users.
3. University library management should institutionalize regular, transparent and objective performance evaluation of librarians. The evaluation should be based on clearly defined performance standards and should be used to identify training needs, recognize outstanding performance and address areas of weakness. This will enhance staff accountability, motivation and productivity, thereby improving effective service delivery.

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Conclusion

The study concludes that staff retirement policies, staff funding policies and staff performance evaluation policies are important human resource management factors associated with effective service delivery by librarians in federal universities in South-South Nigeria. The findings demonstrated significant and strong positive relationships between each of the three staff policies and effective service delivery. In particular, the relationship between staff retirement policies and effective service delivery indicates that well-organized retirement and succession arrangements can promote staff motivation, continuity and knowledge transfer within university libraries. Similarly, the significant relationship between staff funding policies and effective service delivery shows that adequate financial support for staff recruitment, training, development, promotion and welfare is essential for maintaining competent and committed library personnel. The study also established that effective staff performance evaluation policies contribute significantly to service delivery by promoting accountability, identifying staff development needs, recognizing good performance and encouraging librarians to improve their productivity. Overall, the study concludes that effective service delivery in federal university libraries cannot be achieved solely through the provision of library resources and facilities; it also requires sound and properly implemented staff policies. Therefore, university authorities and library administrators should give greater attention to the formulation, funding and effective implementation of retirement, staff funding and performance evaluation policies

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as complementary strategies for enhancing librarians' effectiveness and sustaining quality library services.

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