Training and Retraining: A Catalyst for Retooling 21st Century Librarians for Effective Information Service Delivery in Academic Libraries in South South, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines training and retraining: a catalyst for retooling 21st Century librarians for effective information service deliver in academic libraries in South-south, Nigeria. The total population for this study comprises of 235 (Two hundred and thirty five) librarians working in State, Federal and Private university libraries in South-south, Nigeria. The entire population of the study was sampled using total enumeration sampling technique because of the small and manageable size of the population. Findings from this study revealed that the service rendered in full capacity to users by librarians in university libraries in South-south, Nigeria in this 21st Century are e-library service, e-mail service, e-reference service, selective dissemination of information service via social media networks, printing and photocopying service, online referral service and Internet service among others; that the librarians working in academic libraries in the South-south, region of Nigeria needs training in librarianship in the area of e-library service, e-mail Service, e-reference service, OPAC service, selective dissemination of Information on social media networks, digitization services, that training and retraining of librarian working in university libraries in the South-south region of Nigeria will lead to effective service delivery in the library, timely service delivery in the library, error free information services for library users, user satisfaction with library services and resources, easy access to library resources for library users, development of positive attitude to work among librarians. Recommendations were made based on the findings of the study which include: University library management should support the training and retraining of their librarians through TETFUND and other sources to ensure that their libraries are equipped with capable librarians who can function effectively in the face of the 21st Century information demands of the library users among others.

Keywords: Training, Retraining, Information, Service Delivery, Librarians.

Introduction

It is a known fact that libraries have witnessed significant changes in recent years. This change which is brought about by information and communication technologies has impacted on the mode of providing information services. The traditional methods of information dissemination have given way to electronic means of communication. While the developments and application of ICT in library operations have improved and facilitated the dissemination of information and access, it has equally provided new roles in information provision, dissemination and transfer (Emezie & Nwaohiri, 2013). Librarians' in this 21st Century no longer play a passive role rather they assume an active role. They are no longer custodian of books but the gate way to a myriad of information sources. Ogunsola (2011) observes that traditional libraries housed books, journals, manuscript and other sources of recorded information. The 21st Century however brought a complete turnaround in library practice.

Apart from the provision of variety of resources and services in digital formats, there is opportunity for the use of ICT facilities in carrying out library operations. Opportunities also abound for users to acquire skills necessary to navigate the web for information relevant them. Lee (2005) observes that while the business world is changing the new knowledge economy and digital age libraries of all types are undergoing drastic changes too. The present day libraries and her services have metamorphosed from manual system to technology driven operations. The use of technology has not only improved the resources and services of the library, but has brought a tremendous change in the pattern by which services are rendered. Akintunde (2004) observes that even the vocabulary of librarianship is changing: dissemination is being replaced by communication, repository by data, literature by knowledge, search by navigation, etc.

The advent in technology brought a new turn in information acquisition, processing and retrieval. For librarians therefore, to render effective information services to their users, they must be trained and retrained to align themselves to the technological changes that have been in vogue for the last few years. Librarians are expected to be versatile in all kinds of information handling jobs and management of human and non-human resources in their libraries. The effectiveness of these professionals in the discharge of their services depends on the extent of acquisition of relevant education, training, skills and competencies. Areas where librarians can be

trained and retrained include: library administration, publishing, archives and records management, digitalization, information technology, information retriever, information dissemination Database management etc all in the digital age or the 21st Century (Eyo, Afebende & Nkanu, 2018). The training and retraining are geared towards improving job performance with the ultimate aim of achieving library set goals and objectives. Training and retraining can help librarians to be current with new knowledge and development in their field. This therefore means that, librarians' education

and training keeps them more committed on the job. Moreover, Nigerian libraries will function adequately when they have librarians of genuine intellectual quality, supported by first-class professional training from library schools of high quality/sound professional bodies in librarianship. It is however pathetic that a good number of librarian of the 21st Century are still practicing primitively. It is on this not that this study sets out to examine training and retraining as a catalyst for retooling librarians for effective information service deliver in academic libraries in South-south, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the vast improvement in technological innovations around the globe and the massive adoption of ICT for library services and operations in the developing countries of the world, it is disheartening that the level at which technology is been embraced in developing countries like Nigeria among the librarians is still at its infancy which makes rendering of effectively library services almost unachievable. This slow adoption of current ICT gadgets for library services among librarians in Nigeria is however down to lack of training of librarians. It is normal for individuals to adopt

and make use of what they are aware of. This is also applicable to librarians working in academic libraries, many of the librarians are lacking the requisite skill operate as digital libraries or as a hybrid librarians as a result of technological skill deficit. Therefore should librarians who are the major player in the information society be left untrained, the possibility of poor information service delivery in higher institution of learning in Nigeria should be expected. This however has great effects on the actualization of academic library goals of supporting teaching, learning and research.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine training and retraining as a catalyst for retooling librarians for effective information service deliver in academic libraries in South-south, Nigeria. To attain this goal, the study stipulated the following specific objectives, which are to:

1. determine the services rendered in the library by librarians in this 21st Century.

2. ascertain the areas of information service delivery in the 21st Century where librarians require training.

3. determine the types of training/retraining required by librarians for effective service delivery in the 21st Century.

4. ascertain the effect of training and retraining of librarians on service delivery in academic libraries.

5. identify possible problems of inadequate training and retraining of librarians to service delivery in academic libraries.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been raised to guide this study:

1. What are the services rendered by librarians in academic libraries in South-south, Nigeria in the 21st Century?

2. What are the areas of information service delivery where librarians require training in academic libraries in South-south, Nigeria in this 21st Century?

3. What types of training and retraining required by librarians for effective service delivery in academic libraries in South-south, Nigeria in this 21st Century?

4. What are the effects of training and retraining of librarians on service delivery in academic libraries in South-south, Nigeria?

5. What are the problems of inadequate training and retraining of librarians to service delivery in academic libraries in South-south, Nigeria?

Literature Review

The 21st century is the millennium of information. It is also seen as the era of explosion of information output and information sources. It is characterized by new patterns of work and new business practices and as a result, new and different skills are required to succeed. In this 21st century, information workers need to be able to locate, assess and represent new information quickly. They need to be able to also communicate information to others. They need to be adaptable, creative and innovative

and be able to understand nature of information service in the technological age (Emezie & Nwaohiri, 2013). Eguavoen (2011) admits that the advent of the internet, digitization and the ability to access library and research materials from remote locations have created dramatic changes by the end of the 20th Century.

Ramzan (2004) asserts that developments like expert systems, wireless networks, virtual collections, interactive Web interfaces, virtual reference services, and personal Web portals bring about greater changes since the start of the new millennium. Moghaddam (2009) is of the view that as information technologies, information systems and information networks have been developing, this 21st Century has also witnessed a dramatic change in users' information seeking pattern. As the traditional custodian of information, librarians in the 21st Century need to be aware of these significant changes and as such employ their technological knowhow and intellectual masterpiece in order to retain the leading role of the academic libraries in supporting teaching, learning and research. This means that the 21st century librarian will have to be armed with competent skills that will enhance the provision of effective library services to meet client's changing information needs. Library services in the 21st century are mostly done with the aid of Information and

Communication Technology. Information and Communication Technology has impacted and improved all sectors of the economy and the library is not left out of this. Yahaya, Aliyu and Adamu (2016) asserted that the services rendered by librarians to their users in academic librarians include but not limited to: circulation services (Reader Services), serial services, electronic library services, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) services, social media services etcetera. However, to gain the skills and competences needed for better services deliveries in libraries, there is need for training and retraining of librarians.

Emezie and Nwaohiri (2013) posited that some of the areas where librarians need training and retraining are: good interpersonal skills acquisition, ICT skill acquisition, information literacy skills etcetera. Omekwu and Echezona (2008), mentions basic knowledge of computers and their capabilities; Competency with search engines; internet facilities; e-mail; internet navigator tools, web browsers and web file formats; database software; internet development and management know-how as the necessary areas where librarians needs to be trained. Also, Krishnan (2011) posited that in his study that some of the 21st century skills that can be acquired by librarians include communication and collaboration skill, creativity and innovation

skill, critical thinking and problem solving skill, media literacy skill, ICT literacy skill, flexibility and adaptability skill among others. The effect and benefits of training librarians operating in academic libraries for effective service delivery cannot be either rated or overemphasized especially in this new advanced technology age where librarians role have changed from traditional sources of information to technology source and also with a large number of self-improvement training facilities which can be accessible online with the involvement of a minimum number of training personnel. Confirming the above statement, Ugwu and Ekere (2010) enumerate some of the benefits of training university librarians as follows: training help employees to learn their job quickly and effectively thereby reducing the cost involved in learning; it helps librarians to update themselves in their fields of specialization thereby improving in their work performance; it serves

as a tool used in developing the full potentials or effectiveness of staff in an organization; it results to a skilled workforce and it helps to change employees attitude to work. However, when librarians are not properly trained and retrained to acquire 21st Century technological skill, they are bound to face some challenges in the course of discharging their duties. Some of the problems of lack of training of staff to service delivery in libraries as identified by Emezie and Nwaohiri (2013) are: Lack of competency, poor technology literacy, poor knowhow of internet connectivity and its uses among librarians, lack of recent technological knowhow, primitive information delivery, poor librarian/user relationship, slow articulation of user needs etcetera. To be able to deliver effective library services in this age of information explosion, librarians needs to acquire 21st century ICT skills that is required.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The total population for this study comprises of 235 (Two hundred and thirty five) librarians working in State, Federal and Private university libraries in South-south, Nigeria. There are 6 (Six) Federal university libraries, 8 (Eight) state university libraries and 9 (Nine) private university libraries

in South- south, Nigeria as at the time of this study. The entire population of the study was sampled using total enumeration sampling technique because of the small and manageable size of the population. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire which was distributed to the respondent face to face at their various offices across all the

university libraries in South-south, Nigeria. 235 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondent and a total of 202 was duly completed and found usable, therefore there was 86% response rate. The data collected for this study was analyzed simple percentage, frequency counts and bar charts.

Findings and Discussion

Fig 1: Gender Distribution of the Respondents
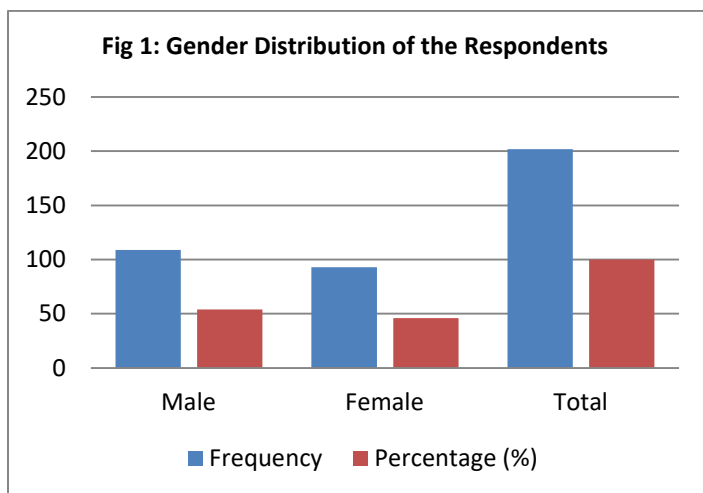
From figure 1, it can be seen that there are 109(54%) male librarians while there are 93(46%) females. This implies that there are more male librarians in Universities libraries in South-south Nigeria than their female counterparts.

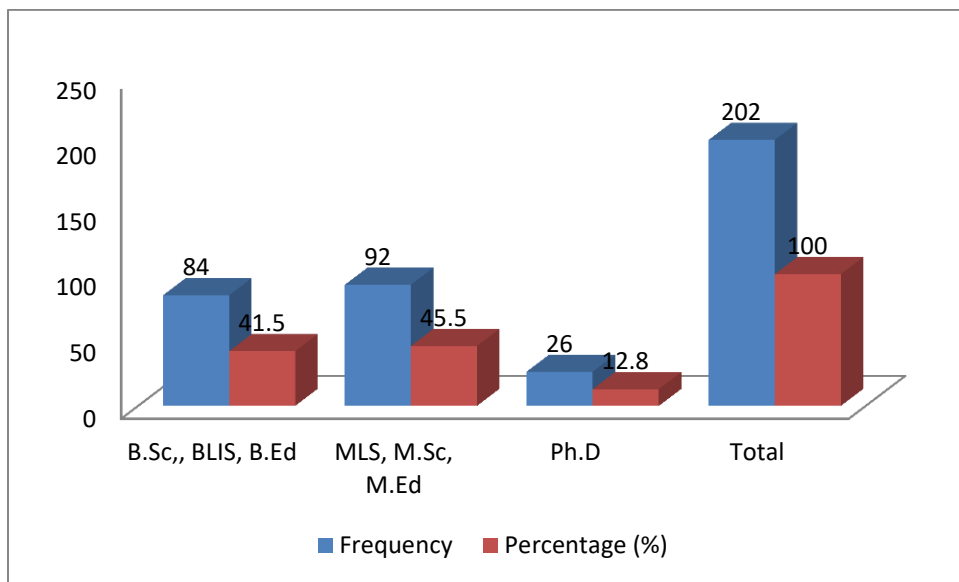**Figure 2: Distribution of respondents by Educational Qualification(s)**

Figure 2 shows that there are 92(45.5%) respondents with MLS, M.Sc and M.Ed certificates in librarianship, 84(41.5%) of respondents hold B.Sc, BLIS, and B.Ed certificate in librarianship and 26(12.8%) of the respondents hold a Ph.D certificate in librarianship. This means that majority of the respondents are MLS, M.Sc and M.Ed degrees holders in librarianship.

Research Question 1: What are the services rendered by librarians in academic libraries in the 21st Century?

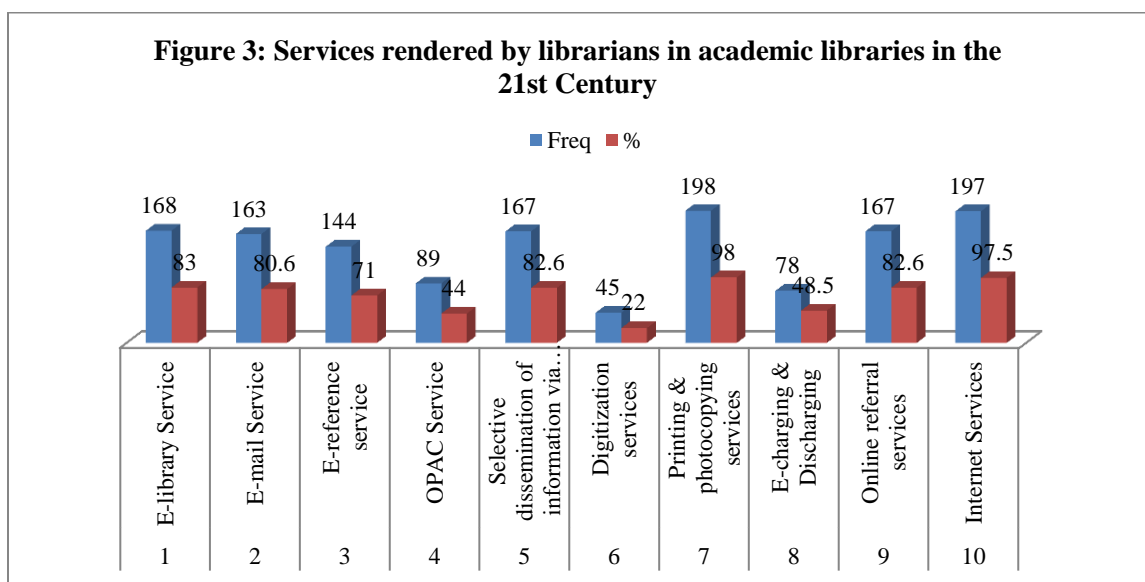Figure 3: Services rendered by librarians in academic libraries in the 21st Century

Figure 3 shows that 168(83%) of the respondents admitted that librarians renders e-library service in this 21st century, 163(80.6%) of them admitted rendering e-mail service, 144(71%) of them admitted rendering e-reference service, while only 89(44%) admitted rendering OPAC service, 167(82.6%) of the respondents admitted rendering selective dissemination of information service via social media networks, only 45(22%) of them admitted rendering digitization service, 198(98%) of them admitted rendering printing and photocopying service, only 78(48.5%) of the respondents admitted rendering e-charging and discharging service, while 167(82.6%) admitted rendering online referral service while 197(97.5%) admitted rendering Internet services. This means that the service rendered in full capacity to users by librarians in university libraries in South-south, Nigeria in this 21st Century are e-library service, e-mail service, e-reference service, selective dissemination of information service via social media networks, printing and photocopying service, online referral service and Internet service while OPAC service, digitization service and e-charging and discharging service are not been properly offered to users by the librarians in academic libraries in South-south, Nigeria in this 21st Century.

Research Question 2: What are the areas of information service delivery where librarians require training and retraining in this 21st Century?

Figure 4: Areas of Information Service Delivery Where Librarians Require Training and Retraining
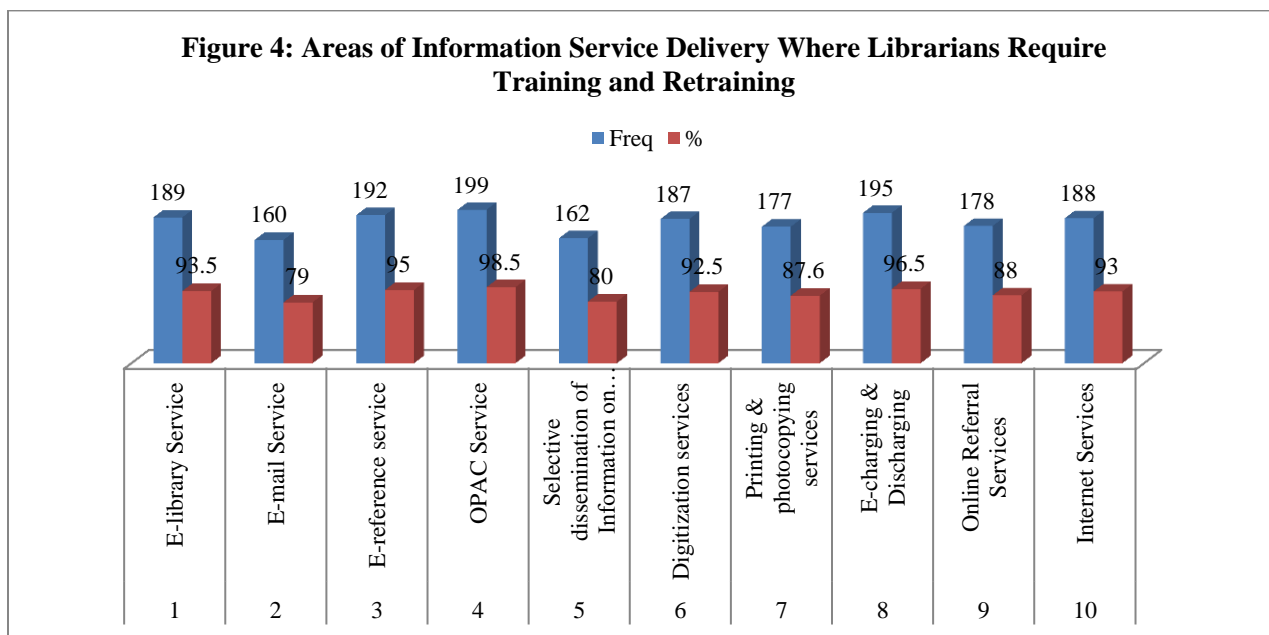
figure 4 reveals that 198(93.5%) of the respondents admitted that they need training in the area of e-library service, 169(79%) of them admitted needing training on e-mail service area, 192(95%) admitted needing training on e-reference service area, 199(98.5%) of the respondents admitted that they need training in the area of OPAC service, 162(80%) also admitted that they need training in the service area of selective dissemination of information using social media networks, 187(92.5%) revealed that they need training in the service area of digitization, 177(87.6%) of them admitted needing training in the area of printing and photocopying service, 195(96.5%) of the respondents admitted they need training in the area of e-charging and discharging of library materials, 178(88%) admitted that they need training in the area of online referral service and 188(93%) admitted that they need training in the area of internet service. This means that the librarians working in academic libraries in the South-south, region of Nigeria needs training in the library service area of e-library service, e-mail Service, e-reference service, OPAC service, selective dissemination of Information on social media networks, digitization services, printing & photocopying services, e-charging & discharging, online referral service and Internet service for them to be able to render effective library services in this 21st Century.

Research Question 3: What types of training and retraining required by librarians for effective service delivery in academic libraries in the 21st Century

Figure 5: Types of training and Retraining Required by Librarians for Effective Service Delivery in the 21st Century
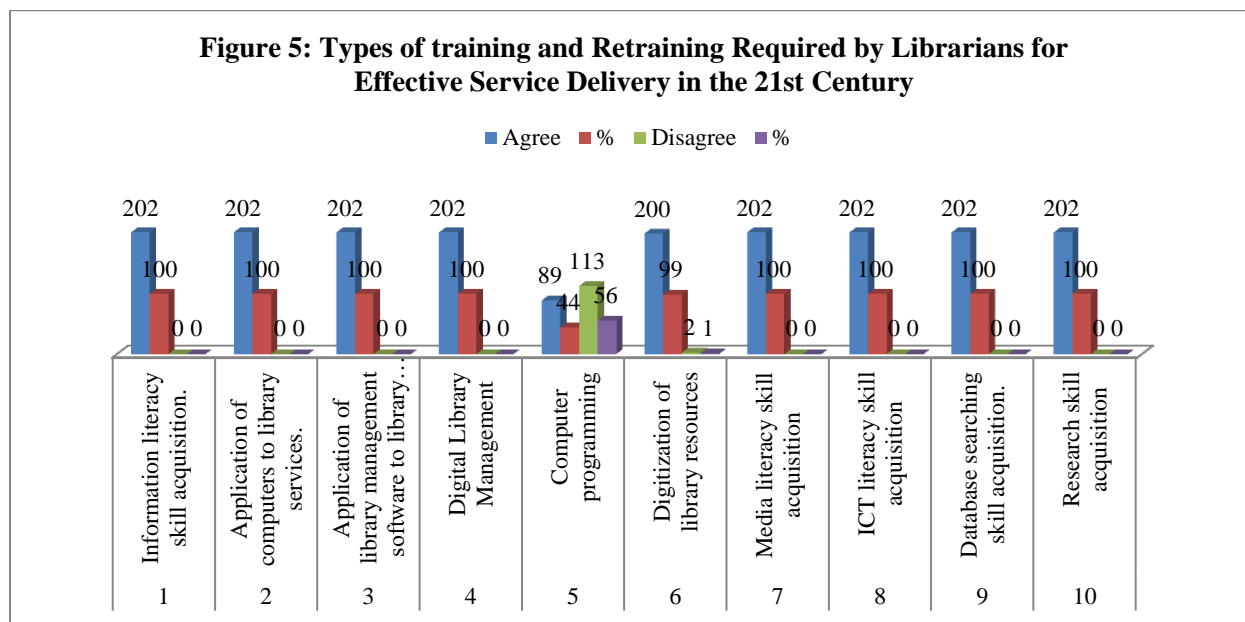
Figure 5 shows that 202(100%) representing all the respondents unanimously agreed that the type of training they need to equip themselves for effective service delivery

in library include training on information literacy skill acquisition, application of computers to library services, application of library management software to library services, digital library management, digitization of library resources, media literacy skill acquisition, ICT literacy skill acquisition, database searching skill acquisition and research skill acquisition while majority of the respondents disagree when asked if training and retraining is needed in for computer programming with 113(56%) of the total population disagreeing to that. This means the type of training and retraining required by librarians in the 21st Century for effective library service in university libraries in South-south, Nigeria are training on information literacy skill acquisition, application of computers to library services, application of library management software to library services, digital library management, digitization of library resources, media literacy skill acquisition, ICT literacy skill acquisition, database searching skill acquisition and research skill acquisition.

Research Question 4: What are the effects of training and retraining of librarians on service delivery in academic libraries in the 21st Century?

Figure 6: Effect of Training and Retraining on Library Services in the 21st Century
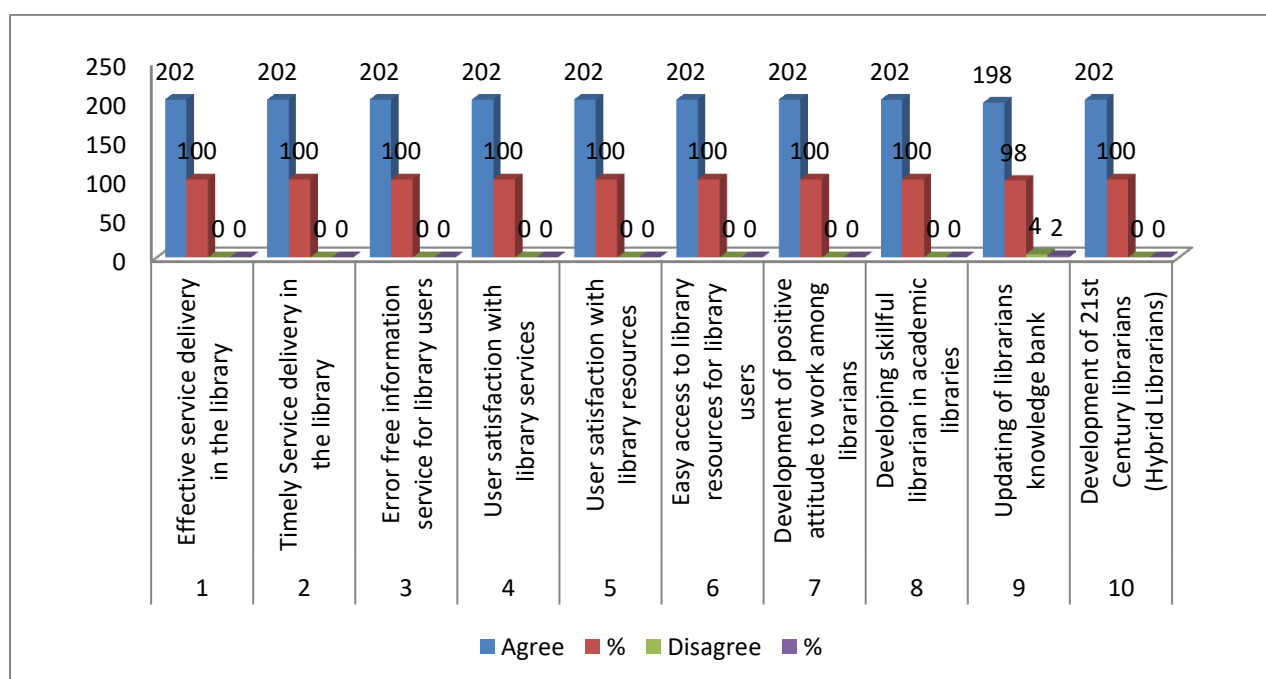
Figure 6 shows that 202(100%) of the respondents agreed that training and retraining of librarians will lead to effective service delivery in the library, timely service delivery in the library, error free information services for library users, user satisfaction with library services and resources, easy access to library resources for library users, development of positive attitude to work among librarians and development of 21st Century librarians (Hybrid Librarians) while majority of the respondents 198(98%) agreed to updating of librarians knowledge bank as one of the effects on training and retraining of librarians for effective library services in the 21st Century. This means that training and retraining of librarian working in academic university libraries in the South-south region of Nigeria will lead to effective service delivery in the library, timely service delivery in the library, error free information services for library users, user satisfaction with library services and resources, easy access to library resources for library users, development of positive attitude to work among librarians, development of 21st Century librarians (Hybrid Librarians) and updating of librarians knowledge bank.

Research Question 5: What are the problems of inadequate training and retraining of librarians to service delivery in academic libraries in the 21st Century?

Figure7: Problems of Inadequate Training and Retraining on Service Delivery in Library
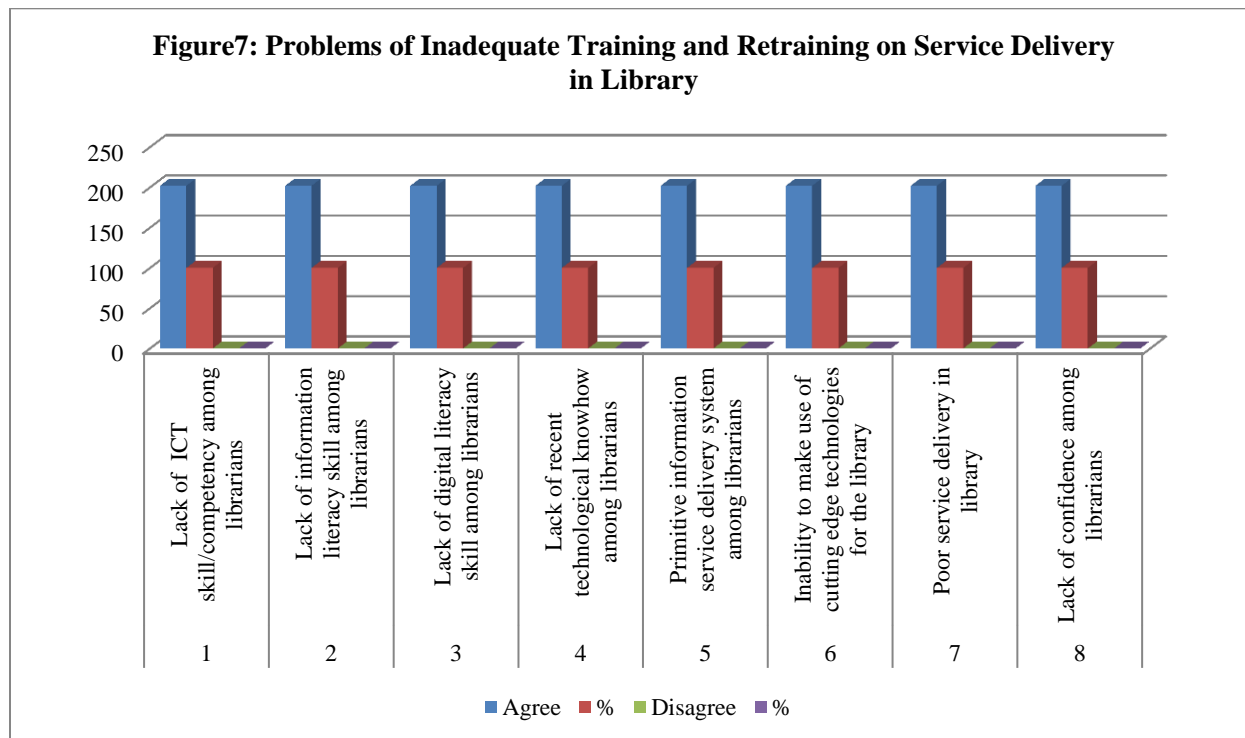
Table 7 shows that 202(100%) representing all the respondents unanimously agreed that lack of ICT skill/competency among librarians, lack of information literacy

skill among librarians, lack of digital literacy skill among librarians, lack of recent technological knowhow among librarians, primitive information service delivery system among librarians, inability to make use of cutting edge technologies for the library, poor service delivery in library and lack of confidence among librarian are all the problems associated with inadequate or lack of training and retraining of librarians on service delivery in library in the 21st Century. This imply that the problems of inadequate training and retraining

of librarians or lack of both on service delivery in academic libraries in South-south, Nigeria include: lack of ICT skill/competency among librarians; lack of information literacy skill among librarians; lack of digital literacy skill among librarians; lack of recent technological knowhow among librarians; primitive information service delivery system among librarians; inability to make use of cutting edge technologies for the library poor service delivery in library and lack of confidence among librarian.

Summary of Key Findings of the Study

Based on the data collected and analyzed for this study, the following are the major findings:

1. It is obvious from the study that 92(45%) of the respondents were male librarians while 93(46%) of them were females. There are more male librarians in universities libraries in South-south Nigeria than their female counterparts. It is also glaring that that there are 92(45.5%) respondents with MLS, M.Sc and M.Ed certificates in librarianship, hence, majority of the librarians in university libraries in South-south, Nigeria are MLS, M.Sc and M.Ed degrees holders in librarianship.

2. This study findings clearly revealed that, the service rendered in full capacity to users by librarians in university libraries in South-south, Nigeria in this 21st Century are e-library service, e-mail service, e-reference service, selective dissemination of information service via social media networks, printing and photocopying service, online referral service and Internet service while OPAC service, digitization service and e-charging and discharging service are not been properly offered to users by the librarians in academic libraries in South-south, Nigeria in this 21st Century. This finding is in agreement with that of Yahaya, Aliyu and Adamu (2016) who

found that the services rendered by librarians to their users in academic libraries in the 21st Century include but not limited to circulation services (Reader Services), serial services, electronic library services, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) services, social media services among others.

3. This study clearly shows that, the librarians working in academic libraries in the South-south, region of Nigeria needs training in librarianship in the area of e-library service, e-mail Service, e-reference service, OPAC service, selective dissemination of Information on social media networks, digitization services, printing & photocopying services, e-charging & discharging, online referral service and Internet service for them to be able to render effective library services in this 21st Century. This finding also corroborates the finding of Emezie and Nwaohiri (2013) who found that some of the areas where librarians need training and retraining are: good interpersonal skills acquisition, ICT skill acquisition, information literacy skills etcetera. Also, Omekwu (2003), mentions basic

knowledge of computers and their capabilities; Competency with search engines; internet facilities; e-mail; internet navigator tools, web browsers and web file formats; database software; internet development and management know-how as the necessary areas where librarians needs to be trained.

4. This study clearly shows that, the type of training and retraining required by librarians in the 21st Century for effective library service in university libraries in South-south, Nigeria are training on information literacy skill acquisition, application of computers to library services, application of library management software to library services, digital library management, digitization of library resources, media literacy skill acquisition, ICT literacy skill acquisition, database searching skill acquisition and research skill acquisition. These findings are in line with that of Krishnan (2011) who found that that some of the types of 21st century skills that can be acquired by librarians include communication and collaboration skill, creativity and innovation skill, critical thinking and

problem solving skill, media literacy skill, ICT literacy skill, flexibility and adaptability skill among others.

5. This Study clearly shows that training and retraining of librarian working in university libraries in the South-south region of Nigeria will lead to effective service delivery in the library, timely service delivery in the library, error free information services for library users, user satisfaction with library services and resources, easy access to library resources for library users, development of positive attitude to work among librarians, development of 21st Century librarians (Hybrid Librarians) and updating of librarians knowledge bank. This is in agreement with Ugwu and Ekere (2010) who affirmed that the benefits of training and retraining university librarians as follows: help librarians to learn their job quickly and effectively thereby reducing the cost involved in learning; it helps librarians to update themselves in their fields of specialization thereby improving in their work performance; it serves as a tool used in developing the full potentials or effectiveness of staff in the library; it

results to a skilled workforce and it helps to change librarians attitude to work

6. This study vividly shows that, that the problems of inadequate training and retraining of librarians or lack of both on service delivery in academic libraries in South-south, Nigeria include: lack of ICT skill/competency among librarians; lack of information literacy skill among librarians; lack of digital literacy skill among librarians; lack of recent technological knowhow among librarians; primitive information service delivery system among librarians; inability to make use of cutting edge technologies for the library poor service delivery in library and lack of confidence among librarian. This supports Emezie and Nwaohiri (2013) who found that, lack of competency, poor technology literacy, poor knowhow of internet connectivity and its uses among librarians, lack of recent technological knowhow, primitive information delivery, poor librarian/user relationship, slow articulation of user needs etcetera are problems associated with poor training and retraining of

librarians in academic libraries in

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the study it is crystal clear that, the services rendered to users by librarians in university libraries in South-south, Nigeria in the 21st Century include: e-library service, e-mail service, e-reference service, selective dissemination of information service via social media networks, printing and photocopying service, online referral service and Internet service. Also, librarians working in academic libraries in the South-south, region of Nigeria needs training in librarianship in the area of e-library service, e-mail Service, e-reference service, OPAC service, selective dissemination of Information on social media networks, digitization services etcetera for them to be able to render effective library services in this 21st Century. Similarly, the type of training and retraining programme required by librarians in the 21st Century for effective library service in university libraries in South-south, Nigeria include training on information literacy skill acquisition, application of computers to library services, application of library management software to library services, digital library management, digitization of library resources, media literacy skill acquisition, ICT literacy skill acquisition among others.

Nigeria.

It is clear that training and retraining of librarian working in university libraries in the South-south region of Nigeria will lead to effective service delivery in the library, timely service delivery in the library, error free information services for library users, user satisfaction with library services and resources, easy access to library resources for library users, development of positive attitude to work among librarians etcetera. However, some of the problems of inadequate training and retraining of librarians or lack of both on service delivery in academic libraries in South-south, Nigeria include: lack of ICT skill/competency among librarians; lack of information literacy skill among librarians; lack of digital literacy skill among librarians; lack of recent technological knowhow among librarians; primitive information service delivery system among librarians etcetera. In view of the foregoing, the following recommendations were made:

1. University library management should endeavor to frequently train and retrain their staff especially in this age of ICT to enable them acquire skills necessary for 21st Century information service delivery.

2. University library management should support the training and retraining of their librarians through TETFUND and

other sources to ensure that their libraries are equipped with capable librarians who can function effectively in the face of the 21st Century information demands of the library users.

3. University library management should as matter of urgency make training, conferences and seminars attended by librarians a part of criterion for promotion so that librarians will be on

their toes to attend training that will help them become 21st Century librarians.

4. Librarians should strive on their own to equip themselves with 21st Century information service delivery skills through attending seminars, conferences, workshops and the acquisition of higher degrees so that they can be better positioned to deliver effective services in their various libraries in the age of ICT.

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