



An Assessment of the Extent of Provision of Research Support Services in Public University Libraries in Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract

University libraries provide a wide range of services that are meant to contribute to research excellence for the university community. The study assessed the research support services provided by selected public universities in Southwest Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted using a questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. The population of the study comprised 12 librarians from 12 different public university libraries. All 12 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 11 were useably retrieved. Findings reveal that the services provided are under general services, training services and publishing services which show that up to 50% of the research support services listed in the study are provided. Also, results show the services provided by the selected university libraries reveal the extent to which the services are being provided for research support. For general services, training services and publishing services, the university libraries provided about 50% of the services under study at about 50% high extent. The recommendation is that public universities should commit more funding to further providing and sustaining research support tools, and facilities in the selected libraries.

Keywords: Research, Support services, Researcher, Publishing, University library

Introduction

Librarianship has become a profession of interest to Research work constitutes processes such as location, collection, selection, and analysis of information for scholarly work. A lack of access to resources or skills could constitute a problem for researchers at any point in the research process.

University libraries are increasingly focused to provide optimal research support in terms of a vast range of needed print and digital resources and services in universities. Singh (2021) explained that in reviewing related literature, he observed that few universities are providing research support services in conformity with global demands. There is the need therefore to introduce cutting-edge technologies in research which will ensure that the right research support services are provided for researchers within a university community thereby ensuring the research output is of good quality and also provide global visibility. However, university library services and infrastructure is what facilitate research output and

successful research.

The digital age brings with it the need for libraries to re-invent their services to meet up with the current needs of their users. Aside from the provision of teaching and learning services and resources, academic libraries also serve their research communities. However, lack of funding and paucity of human and material resources have put in doubt the quality of services offered by public academic libraries across the globe, mostly in developing countries like Nigeria. Academic libraries aim at supporting the research goals of their user community, by providing information resources, reference services, consultation, guidance, and training to their users. Thanks to the ease of access made possible by ICT - library services have been made faster and easier in recent times. However, easy access to technology is a double-edged sword. It has created both great benefits for certain classes of users of information and a wide gap due to the digital divide, particularly in libraries in developing countries. Libraries have in recent years

embraced a wider scope of opportunities to expand the information services they can provide to support excellence in research output. Olowokere, Ismaila, and Rashaq (2020) underlined the enormous relevance of ICT in the management of libraries and delivery of quality research support services and explained that the information revolution has enabled libraries globally to adopt new philosophies and technologies for service delivery and cut down the cost of information. The authors further observed, however, that while there is an immense impact of ICT on libraries in developed countries, it is not the case in developing countries. Therefore, full automated services in many libraries in developing countries are yet to be attained and this situation has denied library users the opportunities for full information services. More library users have also gone beyond the use of the physical library to using the information in the virtual space.

Though the availability of open-source resources has mediated the problem of lack of resources in our libraries, poor funding has masked another major problem, which is a lack of knowledge and technical know-how to identify and configure open-source resources to the great advantage of library users by librarians. In their work, Research Information Network & Research Libraries UK (2011:7) observed that libraries are adapting more to the change brought about by the digital revolution, a trend that makes their clients leave the physical library and utilize cyberspace more. Many researchers are now content creators and not mere consumers. Libraries, therefore, find new ways to remain relevant in providing the researchers with needed information.

This study seeks to examine the level of availability of research support services in Nigerian public university libraries.

Statement of Problem

Provision of research support services is a major challenge to many academic libraries because of inadequate funds, though there may be other factors responsible for poor research services. Despite the strategic relevance of research in the university system, there is insufficient information about the delivery of research support services in Nigerian public academic libraries. Other aspects of library service have a fairly significant research base as well. Evidence-based information is essential for planning and budgeting. Therefore, this study adopts a 360-degree approach to identify the research support services that are provided in academic libraries in Southwestern Nigeria to

produce holistic information for management and planning.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to assess the research support services provided for users by selected public university libraries in Southwest Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. identify the research support services that are provided by selected public university libraries in southwest Nigeria.
2. assess the extent of provision of research support services in selected public university libraries in southwest Nigeria.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey design. The use of the research design is found suitable because it will enable the researcher to better explain and interpret the population and sample. The population of the study comprised librarians in public university libraries in the southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria. This was made up of 12 librarians purposively selected from 12 government-owned universities. The universities included (7) federal universities and (5) state universities. Due to the manageable size of the population, there was no sampling. Data for the study were collected using a well-structured questionnaire. The Research support services scale developed by Wijetunge, Silva and Manatunga (2020) was adapted to measure the extent of the research support services offered by the selected libraries by the respondents. The questionnaire had three sections. Section A Demographic Information, Section B: Research Support Services Provided the scale and Section C: Extent of Provision of Research Support Services scale. Section A elicited background information from the respondents. Section B was presented on a two-option scale of either "provided" or "not provided". The section is sub-divided into research support for general services, research support for training services and research support for publishing services. Data collected in this section were used to determine the research support services each of the university libraries provided for their users. Section C concentrated on collecting information on the extent of the provision of research support services in the selected university libraries. This section was rated on a five-point scale ranging from Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE), and Not At All (NAA). This section consisted of the same questions as in section B and was sub-divided as well. Of the 12 university libraries, librarians from

11 responded. The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The libraries of the universities selected for the study are indicated below:

Respondents Institutions

Table 1. The list of participating university libraries

S/N	Universities	Type of Public University
1	University of Lagos, Akoka	Federal
2	University of Ibadan	Federal
3	Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	Federal
4	Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta	Federal
5	Tai Solarin University of Education	Federal
6	Federal University of Technology Akure	Federal
7	Federal University, Oye, Ekiti	Federal
8	Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye	State
9	Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho	State
10	Osun State University, Osogbo	State
11	Ondo State University, Akungba	State
12	Ekiti State University, Ekiti	State

Findings

Figure 1 shows the responses on the research support for general services provided and not provided. All the respondents 11(100%) indicated that their library provided a general collection as well as a conducive library environment for their researchers, The services most provided under general services according to the results are general collection (100%), conducive library environment (100%), institutional repository 64%, citation analysis 55%, and online inquiry service 55%. It can be inferred that more of the research support in general services listed are provided by the selected university libraries.

Figure 2 above shows the responses to the research support for training services by the university libraries. 73% of the respondents indicated that they provided referencing styles services, literature search services, one-to-one sessions for users, and undergraduate training, while 27% said they did not. 64% indicated that they did not organize training by reputed Publishers, train for reference management

software, usage of citation databases, and presentation skills, and 36% said they provided the training. 55% indicated that they did not train their researchers for plagiarism detection and thesis/dissertation formats, while 45% said they provided the training. Another 55% indicated that they trained for research skills and how to do a literature review, while 45% indicated that they did not. The results reveal that an average number of the training services listed are provided by the libraries under study.

Figure 3 shows the results of the responses on the research support services in publishing. The results showed that 82% of the respondents said they promote open access publishing and provide liaison librarians in various colleges of the institution, while 18% said they did not. Another 83% said they did not provide DOI numbers for university-published articles, and 18% said they did. 73% indicated that they did not publish university journals, did not provide a list of proofreaders, and did not post permission granted notices, while 27% indicated that they did. Also, 73% said they recommended good quality and predatory journals and had research support units, and 27% indicated that they did not. 64% of the respondents indicated that they provide information on indexing services and indexed journals and provided virtual help and inquiry service, and 36% indicated that they did not. 55% indicated that they did not develop a plagiarism policy for their universities and did not support their academics to develop Google and other profiles, while 45% said they developed such policies. The results reveal that an average number of the listed publishing services are provided by the university libraries under study.

The result in Table 2 presents the analysis of results on the extent of research support for general services. Meanwhile, for convenience and ease of presentation of the results, the researcher considered all the respondents in the response category that indicated very high extent and high extent as sharing one view. In the same way, very low extent and low extent as sharing the same view. Findings in the table revealed the responses to a high extent of provision of services include: all the respondents 11(100%) indicated that their libraries provided research support for general collections services to a high extent. The result showed that the majority 9(81.8%) of the libraries had a conducive environment, and the results showed the majority of 9(81.8%) indicated that they maintained institutional repositories. According to the result, in many of the libraries 7(63.7%) provided

Figure 1. Research Support Services Provided (General Services)

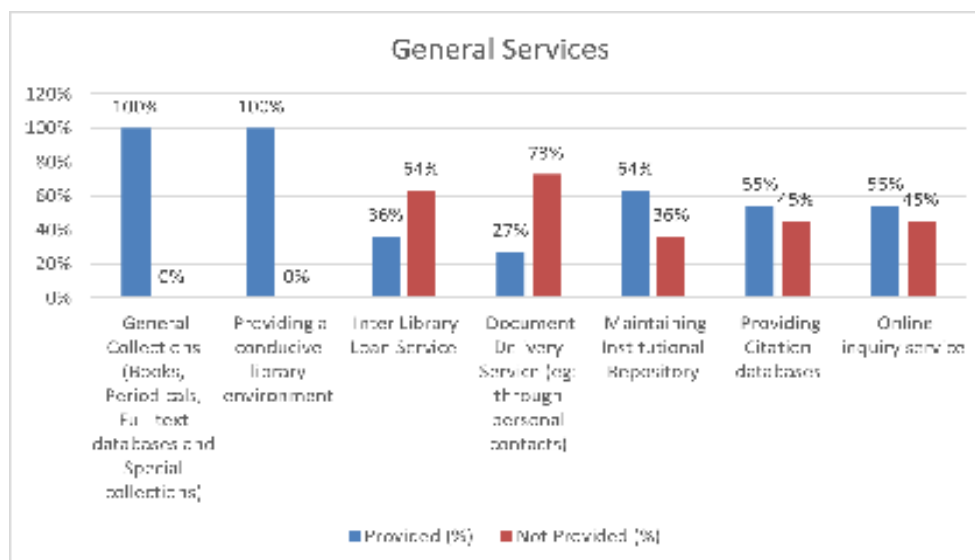


Figure 2. Research Support Services Provided (Training services)

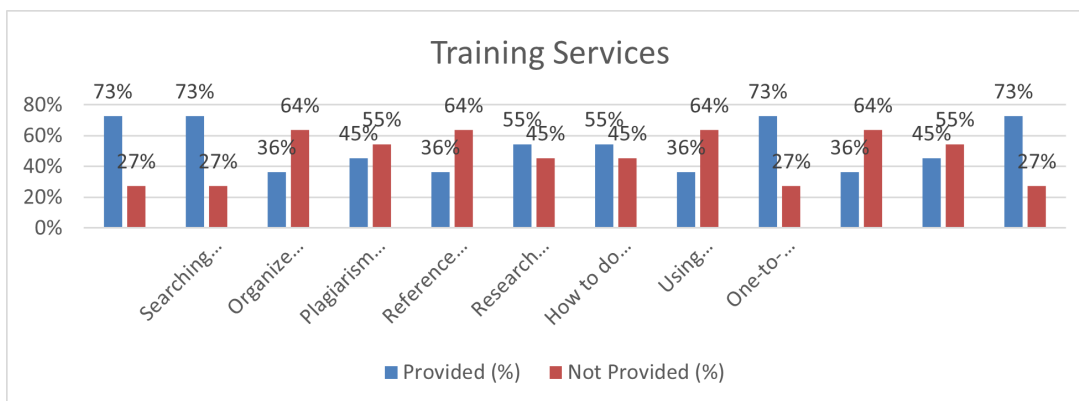
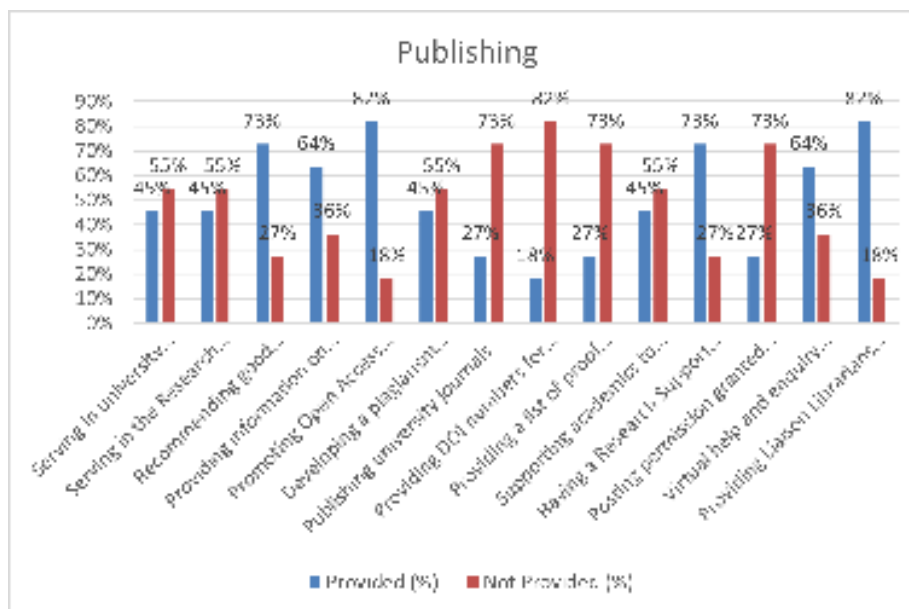


Figure 3. Research Support Services Provided (Publishing services)



citation databases to a high extent, while for online inquiry services, 7(63.7%) provided the service to a high extent.

Figure 4 summarizes the extent of research support for general services offered by the university libraries under study. The provision of a conducive

library environment (36%), general collection (27%), maintenance of institutional repository (27%) and citation databases (27%) are the most general services provided by the respondents.

The result in Table 3 further answered research question 2. The result showed the extent of the

Table 2. Extent of Provision of Research Support Services (General Services)

General Services	VHE (%)	HE (%)	LE (%)	VLE (%)	NAA (%)	Total (%)
General Collections (Books, Periodicals, Full-text databases and Special collections)	3(27.3%)	8(72.7%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	11(100%)
Providing a conducive library environment	4(36.4%)	5(45.5%)	2(18.2%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	11(100%)
Inter Library Loan Service	1(9.1%)	1(9.1%)	4(36.4%)	1(9.1%)	4(36.4%)	11(100%)
Document Delivery Service (eg: through personal contacts)	1(9.1%)	1(9.1%)	6(54.5%)	0(0%)	3(27.3%)	11(100%)
Maintaining Institutional Repository	3(27.3%)	6(54.5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)
Providing Citation databases	3(27.3%)	4(36.4%)	2(18.2%)	0(0%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)
Online inquiry service	2(18.2%)	5(45.5%)	2(18.2%)	0(0%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)

Source: Field Data 2022

Keys: Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE), and Not At All (NAA).

Figure 4. Summary of the extent of research support for general services offered by the university libraries

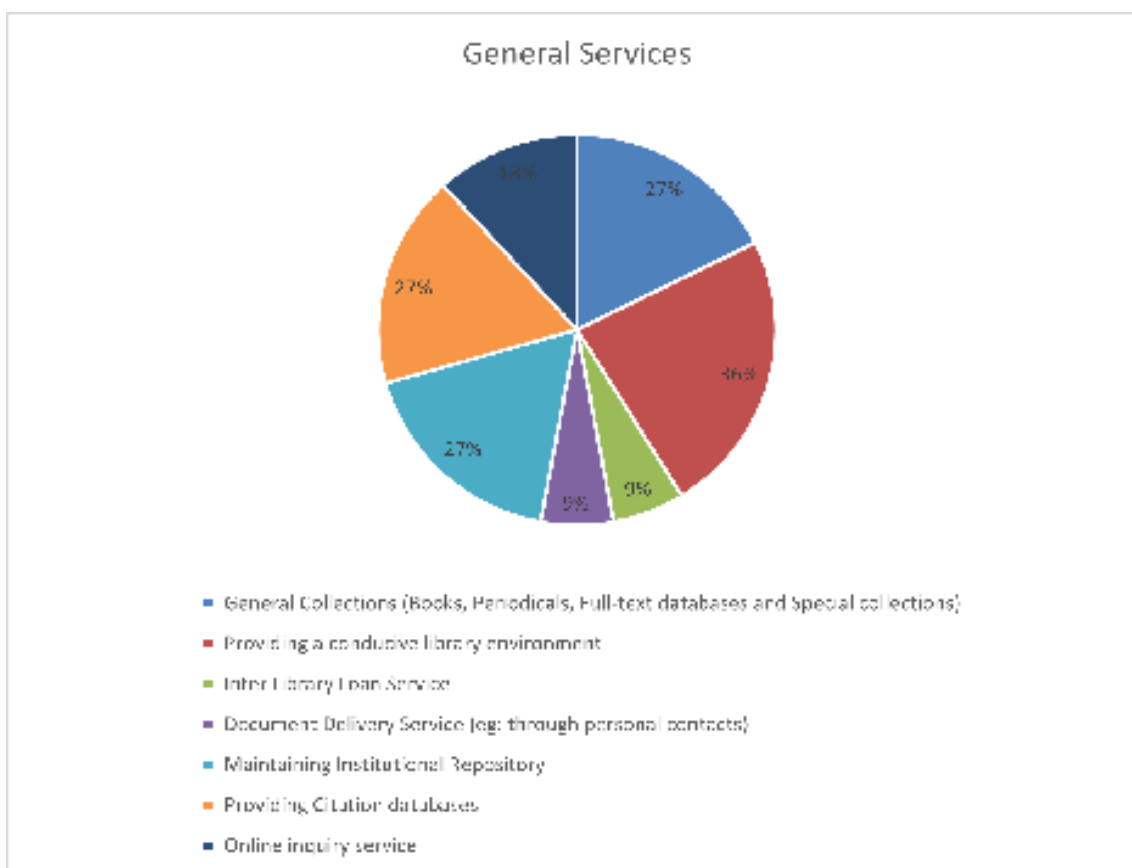
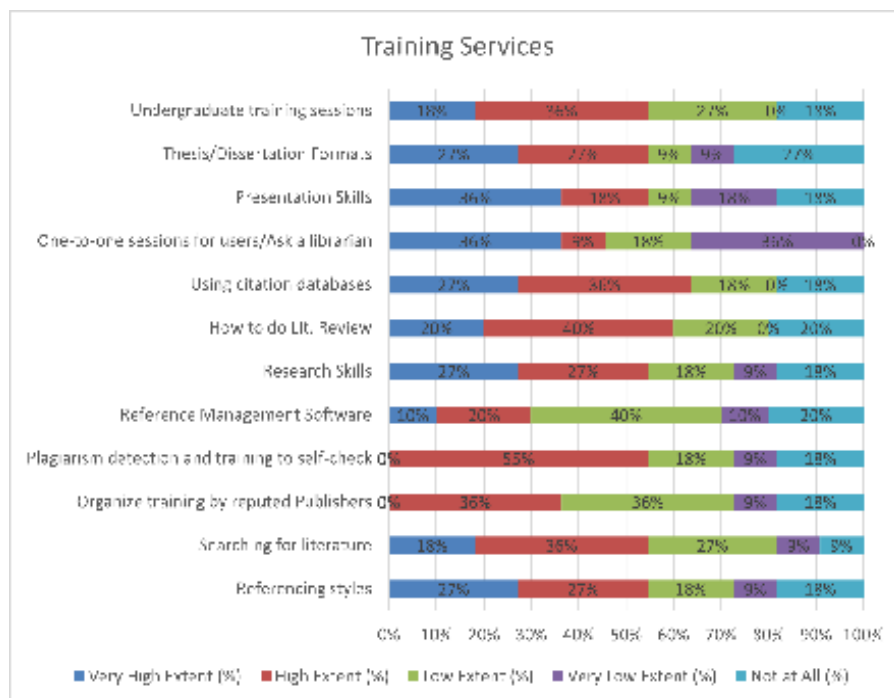


Table 3. Extent of Provision of Research Support Services (Training Services)

Training Services	VHE (%)	HE (%)	LE (%)	VLE (%)	NAA (%)	Total (%)
Referencing styles	3(27.3%)	3(27.3%)	2(18.2%)	1(9.1%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)
Searching for literature	2(18.2%)	4(36.4%)	3(27.3%)	1(9.1%)	1(9.1%)	11(100%)
Organize training by reputed Publishers	0(0%)	4(36.4%)	4(36.4%)	1(9.1%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)
Plagiarism detection and training to self-check	0(0%)	6(54.5%)	2(18.2%)	1(9.1%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)
Reference Management Software	1(10%)	2(20%)	4(40%)	1(10%)	2(20%)	10(100%)
Research Skills	3(27.3%)	3(27.3%)	2(18.2%)	1(9.1%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)
How to do Lit. Review	2(20%)	4(40%)	2(20%)	0(0%)	2(20%)	10(100%)
Using citation databases	3(27.3%)	4(36.4%)	2(18.2%)	0(0%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)
One-to-one sessions for users/ Ask a librarian	4(36.4%)	1(9.1%)	2(18.2%)	4(36.4%)	0(0%)	11(100%)
Presentation Skills	4(36.4%)	2(18.2%)	1(9.1%)	2(18.2%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)
Thesis/Dissertation Formats	3(27.3%)	3(27.3%)	1(9.1%)	1(9.1%)	3(27.3%)	11(100%)
Undergraduate training sessions	2(18.2%)	4(36.4%)	3(27.3%)	0(0%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)

Source: Field Data 2022

Figure 5. Summary of the extent of provision of research support services in training of researchers by the university libraries

provision of research support for training services. The result showed that 6(54.6%) of the respondents indicated a high extent of referencing style service. For literature search training, 6(54.6%) of the respondents indicated that they provided a high extent. In the area of plagiarism detection and training to self-check, 6(54.6%) of the respondents indicated that they provided the training to a high extent. For training in research skills, 6(54.6%) of the respondents provided

high extent services. For How to do literature review 6(60%) reported high extent; Using citation databases 7(63.7%) reported high extent; Presentation skills 6(54.6%) reported high extent; Thesis/Dissertation Formats 6(54.6%) reported high extent and for Undergraduate training session 6(54.6%) reported high extent of provision of service.

Figure 5 summaries the extent of provision of research support services in training of researchers by

the university libraries under study.

Table 4 presents the analysis of results on the extent of provision of research support for publishing services in the selected university libraries. The responses that indicated a high extent of publishing services are: serving in the research council 7(63.6%), recommending good journals 8(72.8%) respondents indicated they had a high extent of service delivery, provision of information on indexing services showed that 7(63.7%) of respondents reported that their libraries provided the services to a high extent. For the promotion of open access journal information, 7(63.7%) affirmed that they provided to a high extent. Respondents from six libraries 6(54.6%) indicated that their library has developed a plagiarism policy

for the university to a high extent. In libraries that had research support units, 6(54.6%) reported this service to a high extent, and on providing liaison librarians for faculties 9(81.8%) reported a high extent.

Figure 6 summarizes the extent of the provision of publishing services for the university libraries under study.

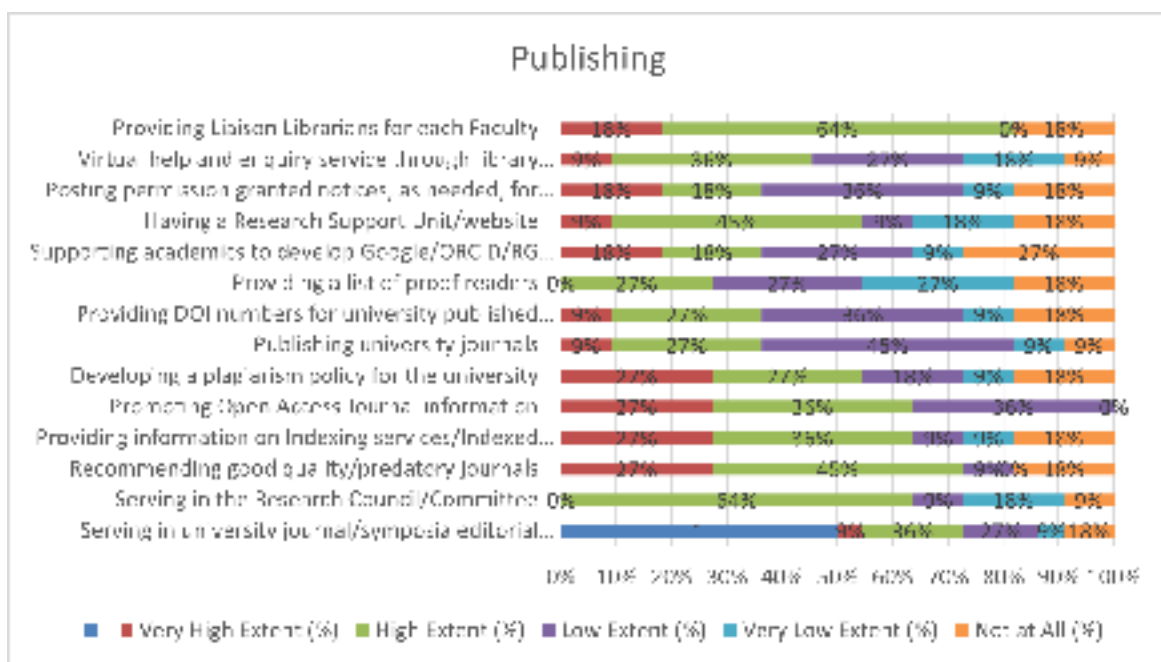
Discussion

The findings of this study on the research support services provided by the public university libraries in southwest Nigeria being studied revealed the services most provided. These include: under general services: general collection, conducive library environment,

Table 4. Extent of Provision of Research Support Services (Publishing Services)

Publishing	VHE (%)	HE (%)	LE (%)	VLE (%)	NAA (%)	Total (%)
Serving in university journal/ symposia editorial panels	1(9.1%)	4(36.4%)	3(27.3%)	1(9.1%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)
Serving in the Research Council/ Committee	0(0%)	7(63.6%)	1(9.1%)	2(18.2%)	1(9.1%)	11(100%)
Recommending good quality/ predatory journals	3(27.3%)	5(45.5%)	1(9.1%)	0(0%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)
Providing information on Indexing services/Indexed Journals	3(27.3%)	4(36.4%)	1(9.1%)	1(9.1%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)
Promoting Open Access Journal information	3(27.3%)	4(36.4%)	4(36.4%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	11(100%)
Developing a plagiarism policy for the university	3(27.3%)	3(27.3%)	2(18.2%)	1(9.1%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)
Publishing university journals	1(9.1%)	3(27.3%)	5(45.5%)	1(9.1%)	1(9.1%)	11(100%)
Providing DOI numbers for university published articles	1(9.1%)	3(27.3%)	4(36.4%)	1(9.1%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)
Providing a list of proof readers	0(0%)	3(27.3%)	3(27.3%)	3(27.3%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)
Supporting academics to develop Google/ORCID/RG profiles	2(18.2%)	2(18.2%)	3(27.3%)	1(9.1%)	3(27.3%)	11(100%)
Having a Research Support Unit/ website	1(9.1%)	5(45.5%)	1(9.1%)	2(18.2%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)
Posting permission granted notices, as needed, for copyrighted material	2(18.2%)	2(18.2%)	4(36.4%)	1(9.1%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)
Virtual help and enquiry service through library website	1(9.1%)	4(36.4%)	3(27.3%)	2(18.2%)	1(9.1%)	11(100%)
Providing Liaison Librarians for each Faculty	2(18.2%)	7(63.6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	2(18.2%)	11(100%)

Source: Field Data 2022

Figure 6. Summary of the extent of the provision of publishing services for the university libraries

institutional repository, citation analysis, online inquiry service; under training services: referencing styles services, literature search services, one-on-one sessions for users, undergraduate training, research skills and how to do literature review; and under publishing: promoting open access publishing, providing liaison librarians in various colleges of their institutions, recommended good quality and predatory journals, had research support units, provide information on indexing services and indexed journals, provided virtual help and inquiry service, developing plagiarism policy for their universities, supporting academics to develop Google and other profiles. These findings agree with Wijetunge, where the results of the authors' research revealed that the services provided by the university libraries they studied provided all basic services. Findings from other studies, Silva and Manatunga (2020), Silva (2016), Haddow & Mamtora (2017), Ogier & Stamper (2018), Brantley et al. (2017), show that

The findings of this study on the extent of provision of research support services in the public university libraries in southwest Nigeria being studied revealed the extent of services provided. These include: under general services: General collection; Conducive library environment, Institutional repository, Citation databases and Online inquiry revealed high extent of services provision, reflecting more than 50% of the services are provided to a high extent; while Interlibrary loan service, and Document delivery service showed low extent. For training services: Referencing styles,

searching for literature, Plagiarism detection, Research skills, How to do a literature review, Using citation databases, Presentation skills, Thesis/Dissertation formats, and Undergraduate training sessions revealed a high extent of services provided. This result showed that many of the listed training services are provided at about 50% high extent. However, this result did not corroborate Kennan, Corral, & Afzal (2014) study where innovative service provision was in the area of bibliometrics and data management. But there was also the provision of services in the areas of journal publishing, and grant writing support. The study agrees with Ducas, Michaud-Oystryk and Speare (2020) study in the area of training the service providers to ensure better professionalism in service delivery. The results showed training organized by reputed publishers, reference management software, and one-on-one sessions for users as low extent of services; and for publishing services: serving in the research council, recommending good quality journals, providing information on indexing services, promoting open access journal information, developing a plagiarism policy for the university, having a research support unit, and providing liaison librarians for each faculty showed a high extent of services provision, while serving in university journal panel, publishing university journals, providing DOI numbers for university published articles, providing a list of proofreaders, supporting academics to develop Google profiles, posting permission granted notices, and virtual help and inquiry service, revealed the low

extent of services provided. The extent of provision of the publishing service is 79 points high and 75 points low showing an average level of provision of publishing service in research support. This further reveals that most of the publishing services provide about 50% to a high extent. This result reflected some level of agreement with Brown et al. (2018) study, while also in tandem with Wijetunge, Silva and Manatunga's (2020) study, not many of the libraries in this study provide services that directly support the measurement of research impact. There is a continuous growth in the provisions proffered through proper implementation of research support services.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on this study, the extent of provision of research support services in the selected public university libraries in southwest Nigeria is on average. The study concluded that the selected libraries provided a moderate number of research support services and these services are provided at up to 50% high extent. Based on the findings obtained from this study, recommendations made are that: there is a need to commit more funding to ensure further provision and maintenance of research support tools and facilities in the selected libraries. Also, the universities should improve their research productivity with particular attention paid to support services that measure research performance. Again, the libraries should endeavor to push for more participation in specific university committees and panels where they are sidelined, like research or journal committees, and also involve in university-level strategic plans that will increase faculty and library collaborations to enhance capacity building across the board for librarians, as service providers and academics, who are the researchers; and also research productivity that will attain global best practices.

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