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EDITORIAL

The Ghana Association of University Administrators (GAUA) as part of its mission to promote the advancement of Higher Education in Ghana and around the world provides policy reflective for national development. This is done through research reports, policy analysis, and reflective analysis among others. Mindful of this, the National Executive adopted this Journal from GAUA University of Education, Winneba branch in 2019 to advance this cause. The seventh edition of the journal is thus, the second edition since the adoption.

Motivation for Doing Scholarly Publications Among Professional Librarians in Ghanaian Public Universities

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Abstract

The study investigated the factors that motivated professional librarians to engage in scholarly publication and the type of support provided to facilitate scholarly publication in four public university libraries in Ghana. The study also sought the views of the professional librarians as to whether scholarly publications should be required for their promotion. The research design was a mixed methods approach. The questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from 47 professional librarians while four university librarians were also interviewed for qualitative data. The quantitative data were analysed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20 software while content analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data. The findings revealed that the respondents engaged in scholarly publication to contribute to research in the profession, professional advancement and personal growth, to earn promotion/career advancement, to earn recognition among professional colleagues/peers and visibility. The respondents also affirmed that scholarly publications should be among the requirements for their promotion. The study also identified training, workshops, seminars, conferences and informal mentoring as the major institutional support for scholarly publication. It is recommended that the library management should establish formal mentoring programmes and other sources of funding should be solicited by the professional librarians to facilitate scholarly publication scholarly activities in the libraries.

Keywords: *scholarly publication, professional librarians; academic librarians; academic libraries; public universities, Ghana.*

Introduction

Scholarly publications serve as yardsticks for measuring scholarly output and worldwide ranking of universities as well as to determine the advancement and impact of faculty members of each university (Lin & Cheng, 2005; Meho & Spurgin, 2005; Ondari-Okenwa, 2007). Dhillon et al., (2014) observe that scholarly publication results in creation of new knowledge, raises institutions' reputation, and develops the quality of academic staff as well as economic status of the institution.

Tsafe and Mohammed (2016) define scholarly publications as “those documents published through peer-review process and accepted in the form of recorded sources such as books, chapters in books, conference papers and proceedings, articles in refereed journals, creative works and visual arts among others” (p. 3). In fact, career advancement of academics, including professional librarians, is dependent largely on the size and quality of their research and publication output. Belcher (2009) posits that scholarly publication has turned

into “the major marker of productivity in academia” (p.96); it is also a significant determinant of efficiency of both individual scholars and academic institutions.

Writing in support of scholarly publication by academic librarians, Ocholla and Ocholla (2013) argue that academic librarians provide scholarly information to the academic community; and they can provide this support better by engaging in research and scholarly publication themselves. Furthermore, Gregory and Medford (2006) posit that academic librarians stand to gain much from research and publication because it would enable them to gain promotion as well as maintain their faculty status. In addition, it provides them with ample authority to contribute to the literature of the discipline. Anunobi and Emerole (2008) mention that research and publication contribute tremendously to professional development and career advancement of academic librarians. In addition, the research literature equips them to deliver best information services to other researchers.

Significantly, the available literature indicated that most of the studies done to investigate the factors that motivated professional librarians to engage in scholarly publication were done outside Africa (Sivakumaren, et al., 2012; Perkins and Slowik, 2013; Berg et al., 2013; O'Brien and Cronin, 2016). The few studies that were available on Africa were conducted in Nigeria (Oni and Eziam, 2014; Okonedo, 2015; Tsafe and Mohammed, 2016; Ibegbulam and Jacintha (2016). The implication is that most of professional librarians in Ghana are yet to join the debate on scholarly publication; although it is among the requirements for their promotion and career advancement. Thus, it is imperative to conduct this study to investigate the factors that motivate professional librarians in Ghana to do scholarly publications, the type of support provided to facilitate scholarly publications and their expectations.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- Investigate the factors that motivate professional librarians in Ghana to do scholarly publication.
- To find out the type of institutional support provided to professional librarians to facilitate scholarly publication.
- To seek views of the professional librarians in respect of scholarly publications as requirement for their promotion and career advancement.
- To make recommendations based on the result of the study.

Significance of the Study

- The results of the study are expected to furnish the public university libraries in Ghana with useful information about the factors that motivate professional librarians to engage in scholarly publication and thereby enhance publication activities.
- Public university libraries and policy makers would find the results of the study useful in developing policy guidelines to determine the type of support to provide to facilitate scholarly publication.
- The findings of the study would contribute significantly to the scanty literature available locally in the area of scholarly publication and serve as a point of reference for further research.

Literature Review

Some studies were done to explore the factors that motivated scholarly publication among academic librarians. A study done by Oni and Eziam (2014) among academic librarians in university libraries in Nigeria indicated that the majority published for promotion/career advancement, contribution to knowledge and visibility/recognition. A study done by

Okonedo (2015) among 142 librarians in public universities in South – West Nigeria revealed that majority published for promotion to the next rank, salary improvement, the need to contribute to knowledge, satisfying the need for creativity/curiosity, visibility enhancement, recognition by peers, and to secure better jobs elsewhere.

The results of the study by Tsafe and Mohammed (2016) revealed that the librarians published for promotion and to contribute to knowledge. These findings support that of Okonedo (2015) that majority of librarians published for promotion. Similarly, Ibegbulam and Jacintha (2016) in a study among 85 librarians in Nigerian university libraries indicated that they published mainly for promotion, self-interest and discipline and to contribute new knowledge to research literature. The desire to earn promotion was the highest ranked factor. Another study done by O'Brien and Cronin (2016) among academic librarians from 21 Irish universities indicated that career progression, personal and professional development, prestige, and excellent quality service delivery were the factors that motivated them to engage in scholarly publications.

Despite the immense benefits gained from scholarly publications, there is an ongoing raging debate about expectations for research and scholarly publication among academic librarians. While one school of thought holds the view that academic librarians should contribute to research and publication (Ocholla et al., 2012; Hahn & Jaeger, 2013; McCluskey, 2013) the other school opposes it (Hill, 1994; Olorunsola & Ibegbulam, 2003. Berg et al., (2013) explored the views of university librarians from 19 responding institutions within Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) on this subject. The results revealed that 9 (48%) responding institutions indicated that research was an expectation of every librarian, 6 (31%) indicated that it should be an expectation of some librarians, and 4 (21%) of the institutions indicated that it was not an expectation for any librarian. The findings revealed discrepancies relating to research expectations across CARL institutions and few of the institutions provided formal documentations that defined specific expectations for librarians. Similarly, Sassen and Wahl (2014) in their study among deans and directors of Association of Research Libraries (ARL) reported that 70.4 percent agreed that publication should be required for promotion, tenure, or in most cases both, and 29.6 percent indicated that it should be required for neither. In addition, 60.2 percent of the respondents reported that publication was required for promotion, tenure, or both for librarians and 39.7 percent indicated that it was not required.

Scholarship is said to be a joint enterprise. As such, there is the need for institutional support for scholarly publication among professional librarians. As stated by Black and Leyson (1994) as cited in Sassen and Wahl (2014, p.459):

“If we are to expect librarians to contribute within the faculty structure in the areas of professional practice, scholarship and service, then we must be prepared to provide the structure necessary for success” (p. 459).

Sullivan et al., (2013) did a case study of a Get Published Group at the RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) University, comprising authors as facilitators and librarians who were inexperienced in doing research and publication. The results revealed that RMIT University Get Published Group as a model had succeeded in developing research and publication skills of the librarians. The members of the group considered the safe and supporting environment as an important factor in growth of their confidence. Furthermore, the publication output of the participants exceeded the target set.

A survey was carried out by Smigielski et al., (2014) to determine how Association of Research Libraries (ARL) encouraged research and publication by their librarians. The study revealed that institutional support such as economic support was provided for professional development and travel, release time for doing research. In addition, mentoring programmes were very significant in supporting research and publication among the librarians. Furthermore, the results of a survey conducted by Apolinario et al. (2014) revealed that majority of the librarians were given time on the job to read research-based literature in order to keep current with research literature. Another study was carried out by Sassen and Wahl (2014) to examine the extent of administrative support provided by 73 Deans and Directors among the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) libraries in to boost research and publication activities of librarians. The result indicated that 89.6 percent of responding libraries provided work time for research and publication, while all libraries that offered faculty status allowed librarians to use part of their work time for research and publication. In addition, internal funding was favoured and provided in all libraries that offered faculty status. With regard to the type of training that should be provided by the libraries, informal mentoring came first, support for external training came in second place, formal mentoring came in third place, and library research committee came in fourth place, while 52.1 percent of respondents indicated that such programmes were available in their libraries.

Methodology

Research Design

The mixed method design was considered the most suitable for the study; and a combination of quantitative and qualitative data was collected. The main benefit of this design lies in its coherent and intuitive appeal that provides a link between the qualitative and quantitative paradigms (Onwuegbuzie & Lech, 2006).

Population

Four topmost, largest and well-established public university libraries were selected for the study. These libraries employed the largest population of professional librarians. They are UG, KNUST, UCC, and UDS. The total population for the study comprised 63 professional librarians and four (4) university librarians.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Total enumeration sampling technique was employed to obtain a total of 63 professional librarians and four (4) university librarians which constituted the sample for the study. Egbule and Okobia (2001) emphasized that the whole population can be investigated when the population is small; when there is adequate time to undertake the research, and when the sole purpose of the research is to provide precise account of the population.

The population of professional librarians is shown in Table 1. The breakdown is as follows:

Table 1: Population of Professional Librarians

University Library	Population Size
University of Ghana Library System	21
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology Library System	20
University of Cape Coast Library System	12
University for Development Studies Library System	10
Total	63

Source: Field data, 2017

Instrumentation

Close-ended questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from the professional librarians. The data collected through close-ended questions are fairly easier to use, score, and code for analysis (Koul, 2009). The Likert scale items (such as ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘undecided’, ‘disagree’, or ‘strongly disagree’) were also employed. Semi-structured interview approach was used to collect qualitative data from four (4) university librarians. The flexibility of this approach makes it possible for the discovery or explanation of information that is essential to participants but may not have previously been thought of as relevant by the research team (Stewart et al., 2008). To ensure validity and reliability of the instruments, the questions were guided by objectives of the study. In addition, the researcher adopted the pilot-tested questions used in similar studies done by Sassen and Wahl (2014) and Ibegbunan and Jacintha (2016), but were slightly modified. The validity and reliability of the instruments were also enhanced by combining instruments such as questionnaires and interview schedules to collect data for the study. Finally, the instruments were pre-tested among professional librarians at the University of Education, Winneba Library. Consequently, some of the questions were revised and rephrased based on the responses and suggestions made by the respondents.

Data Collection and Analysis

A total of 48 copies of the questionnaire were self-administered to the professional librarians who were available at the time of the study; 47 were fully completed and returned and also found valid for analysis; representing 97.9 percent response rate. Babbie (2005) posits that a response rate of 50 percent is adequate for analysis and reporting. All of the respondents from UG, UCC, and UDS completed and returned all the copies of the questionnaire. However, one professional librarian from KNUST could not return a copy of the questionnaire. Furthermore, telephone interviews were conducted with the four (4) university librarians of UG, KNUST, UCC and UDS, respectively. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS Version 20) software was used to analyze the quantitative data using frequencies, percentages and tables to interpret the data obtained. The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed. The qualitative data gathered from the interview scripts were analysed by using qualitative content analysis

Results and Discussion

The first objective of the study sought to determine the factors that motivated the professional librarians to engage in scholarly publication. The findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Motivating Reasons for Scholarly Publication

Reasons for Publication	Responses							
	Agree		Disagree		Neutral		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
To Contribute to Research in the Profession	46	97.9	0	0.0	1	2.1	47	100.0
Professional Advancement and Personal Growth	43	91.5	2	4.3	2	4.3	47	100.0
To Earn Promotion	42	89.4	2	4.3	3	6.4	47	100.0
For Recognition Among Colleagues	39	83.0	4	8.5	4	8.5	47	100.0
To Enrich Relationship with Faculty & Colleagues	35	74.5	1	2.1	11	23.4	47	100.0

For Departmental/ Institutional Prestige	35	74.5	3	6.4	9	19.1	47	100.0
For Improved Income	30	63.8	7	14.9	10	21.3	47	100.0

Source: Field data, 2017

The results revealed that majority of the respondents, 46 (97.9%), engaged in scholarly publication to contribute to research in the profession, being the most prominent reason, while only 1 (2.1%) respondent was undecided. Similarly, the interviewees indicated that they conducted research and scholarly publication for the purpose of sharing knowledge, experiences, promotion/career advancement, visibility, and to contribute new knowledge to the existing body of knowledge. With regard to his motive for doing scholarly publication, one interviewee indicated:

“To share knowledge and experiences in the profession. It is a basic requirement for career advancement... promotion”.

This motive for scholarly publication is good for the growth and advancement of the profession since it would result in creation of new knowledge as well as enrich the professional literature, problem solving, and decision making. This finding corroborates a study by Sivakumaren et al., (2012) that reported that librarians mainly engaged in scholarly publication to contribute to research in the profession and share knowledge with colleagues.

The second most important motivating factor why the professional librarians engaged in scholarly publication was for professional advancement and personal growth; and was supported by 43 (91.5%) respondents, 2 (4.3%) respondents disagreed, while 2 (4.3%) respondents were undecided. This result is heart-warming because it would enable the librarians to maintain their faculty status, get promoted and gain recognition. This finding upholds the studies done by Baro and Ebhomeya (2012) and O’Brien and Cronin (2016) which identified personal growth and professional development as the second most important factor that motivated the librarian to engage in scholarly publication.

The desire to earn promotion/career advancement was the third motivating factor why 42 (89.4%) respondents engaged in publication, 2 (4.3%) respondents disagreed, while 3 (6.4%) were ambivalent. This motivation for publication would enable the professional librarians to earn personal prestige and recognition by peers as well improve their incomes. This finding agrees with one of the reasons that motivated the interviewees to engage in scholarly publication as:

“Career progression and advancing the frontiers of knowledge. ... helps me to update myself with new trends”

It also validates the study done by Sivakumaren et al., (2012) that librarians mainly engaged in scholarly publication to contribute to research in the profession and share knowledge with colleagues but partially supports that of Oni and Eziam (2014); Okonedo (2015), and Tsafe and Mohammed (2016) in which promotion/career advancement was not the prominent reason for scholarly publication.

Furthermore, the results revealed that 39 (83.0%) engaged in scholarly publication for recognition/visibility among their colleagues/peers, 4 (8.5%) disagreed while 4 (8.5%) respondents were undecided. This fourth motivating factor for publication implies that the professional librarians would build up their resume/curriculum vitae and rub shoulders with highly reputable colleagues in the profession. This is also in agreement with one of the factors that motivated one of the interviewees to publish who indicated:

“...as a member of the faculty...I have to identify myself with other colleagues through publication”.

With regard to visibility, another interviewee mentioned:

“I received sponsorship ... travelled outside the country on two occasions for international assignments because I published”.

The result also validates the findings of Oni and Eziam (2014); Okonedo (2015), and Tsafe and Mohammed (2016) in which visibility/recognition among colleagues was one of the motivating factors for engaging in publication. It is noteworthy to mention that librarians who publish regularly are seen to be more receptive to change and gain recognition among their colleagues and teaching faculty than those who do not publish (Ahmadu, 2004).

In addition, the fifth factor that motivated 35 (74.5%) respondents to publish was to enrich relationship with teaching faculty/professional colleagues and for departmental /institutional prestige. This finding validates the studies done by O’Brien and Cronin (2016) that identified institutional prestige as a factor responsible for scholarly publication. This finding is significant because the professional librarians can be accepted by the teaching faculty and rub shoulders with them if they could demonstrate evidence of scholarship through publication of well-researched papers.

The sixth and the least factor that motivated the professional librarians to publish was for improved income. As presented in Table 2, 30 (63.8%) respondents agreed that they engaged in scholarly publication for improved income, 7 (14.9%) respondents disagreed, while 10 (21.3%) respondents were undecided. This motive for publication would result in improved living conditions of the professional librarians as well improve their status in society. This finding agrees with the work done by Okonedo (2015) that found that the librarians published for improved salaries.

The second objective of the study sought to investigate the type of institutional support provided to professional librarians to facilitate scholarly publication. Thus, the respondents were asked to indicate the type of support provided by their respective institutions. The results are presented in Table 3.

As can be seen in Tables 3, training, workshops, seminars and conferences were mentioned most often by 36 (76.6%) respondents indicating that it was provided in their respective libraries, followed by informal mentoring, 17 (36.2%); internal research funds, 14 (29.8%); external research funds, 13 (27.7%); experienced librarians assisted in manuscript preparation and submission, 11 (23.4%), and experienced librarians assisted in selection of research topics, 9 (19.1%).

With regard to internal funding for scholarly publication, two interviewees mentioned that only Book and Research Allowance was available and could be used for research and publication activities. According to one interviewee:

“... No, they enjoy Book and Research Allowance for that purpose. it’s enough to publish. They should write proposals for more funding.”

However, one interviewee retorted:

“...internal funds should be provided to facilitate research and scholarly publication among professional librarians the Book and Research Allowance was woefully inadequate”.

Table 3: Institutional Support for Scholarly Publication

Institution	Support											
	Training, Workshops, Seminars, Conferences		Informal Mentoring		Internal Research Funds		External Research Funds		Experienced Librarians and Manuscript Preparation /Submission		Experienced Librarians and Research Topics Selection	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
UG	16	34.0	4	8.5	6	12.8	3	6.4	1	2.1	1	2.1
KNUST	10	21.3	4	8.5	5	10.6	6	12.8	4	8.5	3	6.4
UCC	5	10.6	4	8.5	2	4.2	3	6.4	2	4.2	2	4.2
UDS	5	10.6	5	10.6	1	2.1	1	2.1	4	8.5	3	6.4
Total	36	76.6	17	36.2	14	29.8	13	27.7	11	23.4	9	19.1

Source: Field data, 2017

This finding disagrees with the work done by Sassen and Wahl (2014) in which they reported that internal funding was widely available in responding 83.3 percent of ARL libraries and informal mentoring rather ranked highest and library research committee ranked least as the supports available in the responding ARL libraries. In addition, three interviewees mentioned that they supported professional librarians through informal mentoring, provision of editorial services to polish their manuscripts for publication, and provision of financial support to professional librarians who attended workshops, seminars, and conferences.

It is significant to mention that prevalence of training, workshops, conferences as reported in this study should be encouraged as they would result in capacity building of the professional librarians and enable them to undertake research and publication activities. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy to point out that formal mentoring programme was totally absent in all the libraries. This should be of serious concern because of its negative effect on research and publication among the professional librarians.

The third objective of the study sought opinions of the respondents as to whether scholarly publications should be among the requirements for promotion/tenure of professional librarians. This issue has been a contentious subject and the debate rages on. Arguing in support of the need for librarians to do research, Haddow and Koblas (2004) as cited in Wilkinson (2013) posit that:

Librarianship is a practice-oriented profession, but research is needed to evaluate and improve libraries' services to their patrons: the 'effective interaction between research and practice' can help to create "strong theoretical framework within which a practitioner community can develop and thrive (p. 55).

The findings are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: Scholarly Publication as Requirement for Promotion

Institution	Responses							
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
UG	6	35.3	7	41.2	4	23.5	17	100.0
KNUST	8	61.5	4	30.8	1	7.7	13	100.0
UCC	7	77.8	2	22.2	0	0.0	9	100.0
UDS	4	50.0	4	50.0	0	0.0	8	100.0

Source: Field data, 2017

The results showed that all the professional librarians from UCC and UDS unanimously agreed that scholarly publications should be among the requirements for promotion/tenure of professional librarians, followed closely by 12 (92.3%) from KNUST, while 13(76.5%) from UG gave a positive response, and 4(23.5%) respondents disagreed. In all, a total of 42 (89.4%) out of 47 respondents affirmed that scholarly publications should be among the requirements for promotion/tenure of professional librarians, while 5 (10.6%) respondents disagreed. This finding indicated that majority of the respondents had positive attitudes towards scholarly publications as one of the requirements for promotion/tenure of professional librarians. This finding is beneficial to the profession since it would contribute

new ideas to the discipline, career advancement, personal/institutional prestige, improved economic status of the professional librarians, among others.

Furthermore, all the interviewees unanimously agreed that professional librarians should be able to publish whether or not the publication was a requirement for promotion so that they could support their academic communities.

One interviewee declared:

“Yes, as librarians providing information for others to do research...you must be able to publish. Librarians should be involved in both knowledge generation and sharing”.

Nevertheless, one interviewee lamented that scholarly publication as a requirement for promotion of professional librarians had resulted in career stagnation of some professional librarians who had worked for more than ten years without promotion because of inadequate number of publications. This finding supports the works done by Sassen and Wahl (2014) who reported that scholarly publications were required for promotion/tenure of professional librarians.

Conclusion

It is evident that the professional librarians in this study were motivated by various factors to engage in scholarly publications. The most prominent motivating factor being to contribute to research in the profession in order to share knowledge with their colleagues. Furthermore, the findings revealed that the majority of the professional librarians agreed that scholarly publications should be among the requirements for their promotion. The results also revealed that institutional support in the form of trainings, workshops, seminars, conferences, and informal mentoring were available in the libraries.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

Research and scholarly publication demand funding. Apart from the internal research funds such as the Book and Research Allowance enjoyed by the professional librarians, the professional librarians should also endeavour to identify and secure additional relevant external sources of research funding to enable them to support their research and publication activities.

The library management should establish formal mentoring programmes in the libraries. By this programme, the librarians should be trained in research proposal writing skills that could fetch them research grants from outside their respective institutions. In addition, the senior librarians should mentor their junior colleagues by training them in identifying and choosing research topics and all the rudiments in the research process. This would go a long way to enhance publication activities in the libraries.

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