Research Visibility As An Indicator of Productivity of LIS Professionals and Credibility of the Concerned Institution

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Abstract

The paper discussedresearch visibility as an indicator of the productivity of Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals and which would under normal circumstances consequently bring credibility to their respective institutions. One of the major yardsticks that are used for career advancement and progression of academic staff including LIS professionals in higher institutions of learning research productivity. Promotion and career progression of academic staff including LIS professionals on most occasions depend on their research output amongst other factors. The visibility of the research output of LIS professionals under normal circumstance would add to the credibility of their respective institutions. Ranking of higher institutions of learning in Nigeria is done nowadays by the quantity and quality of the research output of the academic staff that aredisplayed in the repositories of the respective institutions. A conceptual framework which is an original constructisdisplayed. This conceptual model showed the interrelatedness among: research visibility, productivity and institution institution's credibility. In the conceptual model, the productivity of LIS professionals could be properly displayed in the institution's repository. Such things that are put in the repositories could be seen globally if access codes are provided. The paper

concluded that the research visibility could serve as a morale booster to LIS professionals which could directly or indirectly increase the quantity and quality of their publications and whichwould consequently bring credibility and honour to their respective institutions. It was recommended amongst other things that academic staff including LIS professionals should be given all the necessary enablement to pursue their research with vigour.

Keyword: Productivity of LIS professionals; Institutional Credibility; Research visibility.

Introduction

High productivity is of primary concern to employees and employers of all organisations including Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals and their employers in various institutions. This is in support of Babalola, Oyedum and Aboyade (2014) who argued that Productivity is of fundamental importance to the individual including LIS professionals and the organisation. Similarly, Ali, Ali and Adan (2013) submitted that employees' (LIS professional) productivity in an institution is generally acknowledged as a necessary factor that enhances the growth and development of the institution in the academic society. When LIS professionals are productive they enjoy some benefits like career progression. In the study of Cavendish professional (2021), it was observed that when career progression opportunity is offered to an employee including LIS professional it boost their moral and sense of belonging which perhaps foster more loyalty. Furthermore, career progression could foster sharing of valuable information within a profession. LIS professionals normally carry out a good number of assignments in institutions of higher learning. Some of these tasks are subjective and could be easily measured. In the light of this, Measurements of productivity of professional either in academics or elsewhere could often be express as a ratio of an aggregate output to a single input or an aggregate input used in a production process. Ali, Ali and Adan (2013) in their findings submitted that productivity of workers including LIS professionals was revealed as the quality of environment in the workplace (institution) which could simply determines the level of professional's motivation, subsequent performance and productivity. Ogunsanwo (2012) in his studies ascertained that productivity is in assertion/indication at which workers including LIS professionals, an organization (institution), or a country produces goods and services. A direct way of measuring the productivity of LIS professionals is to qualify their research output (productivity).

Research productivity is calculated in terms of the number of journals published, number of conferences attended with paper presentation number of chapters in book, number of books written etcetera. According to Parham (2014) research productivity is an indicator/rate at which research is visible and used by others at seminars, conferences, paper work, and researches etcetera. Additionally, Srivastava and Barmola (2011) stated that research productivity could be the number/frequency which other researchers accessed and cited a research/opinion in their research(es). Research productivity could be a sole assignment or a collaborative one. When the research

output of LIS professionals are uploaded and displayed for other to see, it makes such work to be visible Additionally, Aguillo (2014) submit that research is a measurement of the activity and visibility of the institution, it serves as a good indicator of the impact and the prestige of universities.

Visibility of research could serve as an underlying factor for LIS professionals to be encouraged to be willing to work more and harder on research. The MUP Center-Research (2013) stated that research visibility and many other indicators serve the purpose of ranking universities, nonetheless, most observers affirm that research matters more than anything else in defining the best institutions. This is because they are happy that the output of the research would not go under a curtain. It would rather be displayed for other to see as long as the access code is provided. This could encourage them to be willing to produce more of qualitative research output. In addition, if LIS professional receives incentives to carry out and execute researches, they are more likely to be productive in terms of researches. Such incentives could include research grants, provision of adequate infrastructure, training etcetera. IRIS FMP (2021) submits that as productivity drives businesses, incentives drive employees, more also, incentives are great ways to ensure the motivation of employees to perform the best of their ability.

Research visibility under normal circumstance would be of benefit to the LIS professionals and their respective institutions. Rauhvarger (2010) in his research submitted that globally, university rankings reflect the performance of university research far more accurately than teaching. It would be of benefit to LIS professionals in the sense that others could stay in remote areas and still access the contribution of such professionals in terms of research output. By merely going through the quantity and quality of the research output of LIS professionals, other people elsewhere could evaluate them as highly productive. Dang (2017) was of the opinion that a researcher occupies a very significant position in an institution through research. An academic researchers including LIS professionals are emboldened to collaborate with other institutions and increase institutional visibility through their research outputs.

Moderately research output could be productive or unproductive in terms of what others can see and assess. Some scholars could be described as seasoned, prolific academics while others could be tagged as outdated and unproductive group. Agha, Adam and Ujebe (2018) that research become valuable and productive when it applies to their work and students in the To serve career progression, career advancement and one form of recognition or the other in the academic environment, LIS professional must be highly productive. Research visibility is equally of immense benefit to the respective institutions where LIS professionals are found. Ranking of institutions in term of the overall best institution, best institution is mainly done using the research output of such institutions. It is a practice in vogue in this digital age that universities are ranked globally as being the overall best, overall second best etcetera.

One of the major instruments that are used in university ranking is the quality and quantity of the research output that are uploaded in the institution's repository for others to see. It is a fact that many indicators serve the purpose of ranking universities, but most observers know that research matters more than anything else in defining the best institutions (The MUP Center-Research, 2013). It is not easy to say that one institution is of high standard and other institution is of low standard without having a measuring yardstick. One of the yardsticks that are used to adjudge an institutional credibility and fame is the quantity and quality of the research output that are uploaded for others to see. Putting research output in the institution's repository is equally an indicator of hard work, diligence, productivity and profitability. Research outputs that are uploaded in the repository would normally portray the affected institution as the institution that is every busy without idle hour. When people are looking for institutions which take research and academics seriously such institutions could be referred to.

In other words research visibility would enhance the credibility of individual LIS professionals and their respective institutions. In the paper, a conceptual framework diagrammatically connected linearly and circularly research visibility to whichproductivity of LIS professionals and institutional credibility was shown. The topic was divided into sub-loading and discussed. A visible conclusion and appropriate recommendations were made.
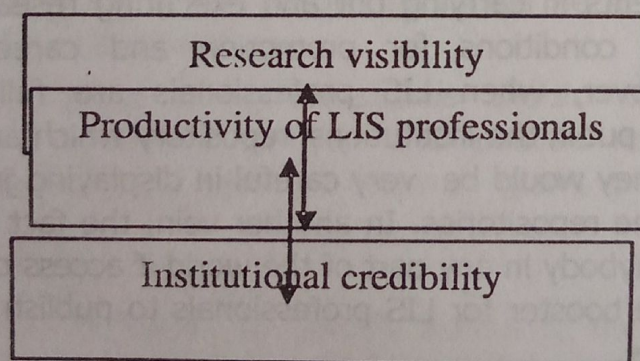
Conceptual model

Fig. 1

The conceptual model is an original design of the researchers. It is based on the postulation that when the research outputs of LIS professionals are displayed on the institution's repository, it is likely to serve as morale booster to them. This would ultimately help them to be willing to increase their research output quantitavely and qualitatively. Moreover, when researchers within and outside the institution access the repository, they would be able to adjudge the institution as being credible or otherwise based on the quantity and quality of the research output which are visible. In other words, there is an inextricable interplay among: research output of LIS professionals, research visibility and institutional credibility. The paper is divided into three (3) major sub divisions namely: research output as indicator of productivity of LIS professionals,

research visibility and productivity as indicators of career progression for LIS professionals and research visibility as pre-requisite for institutional credibility.

1) Research output as indicator of productivity of LIS professionals. One of the major criteria that are used to adjudge academic staff including LIS professionals as productive or less productive is their research productivity. It is one of the standard yardsticks that are used to assess academic staff as being productive, proficient, profitable or otherwise. While it is true that academic staff can carry out a lot of activities in the academic, they must not be lagging behind in researches. It is one of the tangible yardsticks that are used in determining if academic staff is productive or not. The higher the quantity and quality of publication the higher the productivity all other thing being equal.

2) Research visibility and productivity as indicators of career progression for LIS professionals. One of the standards that are used for career advancement in promotion and progression of academic staff is research productivity. For academic staff and LIS professional to be promoted from one level to another, their research output must be high. In many institutions, publications are stratified into: international, state and local. Moreover, publications could be in form of the journals, conference proceedings, chapters in books and books. The higher the anticipated promotion, the higher the conditions that are attached to publications. A higher productive LIS professional would not be deficient in publications including carrying out researches in his/her areas of specialisation. Mentoring colleagues and students in carrying out and executing researches is usually part and parcel of the conditions for promotion and career elevation of LIS professionals. Moreover, when LIS professionals are fully aware that their researches would be put in the institutions' repository which anybody in any part of the globe can see, they would be very careful in displaying junks or sub-standard research output in the repositories. In another vein, the fact that research output could be visible to anybody in any part of the world if access code is given, it could also serve as morale booster for LIS professionals to publish and showcase more of quality publications.

3) Research visibility as pre-requisite for institutional credibility. One of the major criteria that are used to adjudge an institution and to rank such institution as high or low is the quality of the research output that are displayed in the institution repositories for others to see. No wonder in the ranking of universities, polytechnics or colleges one can be hearing of a particular university or polytechnic as been ranked as the best or second or third position etcetera. For example, if a university in Nigeria is ranked number four (4) best in the whole of the world; the management of that university, the staff and the students of such institution would be happy that they are in an institution that has not only a name but credibility. Such feeling of accomplishment and self-fulfilment on the part of the founding fathers of such institution, the managements, staff and the students could serve as

morale booster for the staff to be willing to increase the tempo of their productivity in terms of research.

Such positive evaluation and better ranking are only made possible if the research output of academic staff is made visible through the institution's repository. No one would love to be associated with mediocre. When an institution is ranked high everyone would be proud to be referred to as staff or students of such institution.

Conclusion

From the foregoing it can be concluded that research visibility is one of the major yardsticks of assessing the productivity of LIS professionals. When the research output of LIS professionals and other academic staff are uploaded in the institution's repository, it shows a positive signal to the outside world as such institution would be rated high or low in institutional ranking depending on the quantity and quality of publications that are uploaded in their repository for others to access.

Recommendations

The following recommendations that are germaine to the paper are made

1. All academic staff including LIS professionals from the lowest to the most senior levels must henceforth be mandated to upload their publications in their institutions' repositories.
2. Uploading of publication should henceforth be attached to career progression, promotion and elevation henceforth.
3. Uploading of publications in the repository should be a pre-requite for enjoying other fringe benefits in the institution
4. Academic staff including LIS professionals should be given all forms of encouragement to pursue researches and publish research outcomes. The encouragement could be in form of: research grant, provision of facilities and training.

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