26

PUBLISH-OR-PERISH PRESSURE, PUBLICATION PRODUCTIVITY AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT AMONG LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE EDUCATORS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

Wonu, Anele Kenneth[1] & Umenna, Lucy Chinyere[2]

Library Department, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt[1], National Library of Nigeria, Bayelsa State[2]

anele.wonu@iaue.edu.ng[1] & chinyerelucy55@gmail.com[2]

Abstract

Purpose*: The paper aimed to examine publish-or-perish pressure, publication productivity and career advancement among Library and Information Science educators in Nigerian universities.*

Design/Methodology/Approach*: The design of the study was descriptive research. The population of the study consisted of 32 LIS educators in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and University of Port Harcourt in Rivers State. The sampling technique was census. A questionnaire, titled Publish-or-Perish Pressure, Publication Productivity and Career Advancement Questionnaire (PPPCACQ), developed by the researcher was used to gather the data. The instrument was validated in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education by experts in Library and Information Science. The data were analyzed using mean and stand deviation with criterion mean of 2.50.*

Findings*: The findings showed that the educators experienced publish-or-perish pressure, with a grand mean of 2.68. Publication productivity was also found to be relatively high, with a grand mean of 2.92. The study further revealed a considerable level of career advancement among the educators, with a grand mean of 2.93.*

Implications*: The study suggests that publication requirements and research productivity are important aspects of academic career advancement among Library and Information Science educators.*

Originality/Value *By offering empirical data on the connection between publish-or-perish pressure, publication productivity, and career advancement among library and information science educators in Nigerian institutions, this study adds to the body of current work. The study sheds light on how publishing expectations affect professional development and academic output in the field of LIS. Additionally, it contributes to the small amount of research that focuses exclusively on LIS educators in Rivers State, Nigeria, offering information that might guide institutional policies regarding academic development, research performance, and promotion.*

Keywords: *publish-or-perish, publication productivity, career advancement and Library and Information Science educators.*

Paper type: *Empirical research*

Introduction

University is the place of teaching and research and the dissemination of knowledge. Academic staff should engage in research and publish the results in scientific literature, books, conference proceedings, and other reputable publications. Its significance in publication is that it helps the academics to add to the knowledge, gain recognition and help

develop their career. According to Okoro, et al (2024), research productivity is one of the major concerns in academic career related to the expectations expected of university academics. Publish or perish is a phrase used to refer to the pressure on academics to publish new research to retain their current academic position or advance in their academic career. As universities put more emphasis on research performance, early-career academics face growing demands for increased research productivity, as stated by Aprile et al (2021). This pressure is also observed in Nigerian Universities whereby the increasing number of publications in recognised and indexed journals is becoming important. According to Atah et al. (2024), the introduction of Scopus publication as a requirement in academic promotion has created stress for the lecturers in Nigerian universities.

Publication productivity is the number and quality of the scholarly output over a period by an academic. This can consist of journal articles, conference papers, books and book chapters. Iwu-James et al. (2023) noted that one way of measuring the productivity of academic librarians would be based on the number and the quality of publications. The publication productivity is of specific concern to Library and Information Science (LIS) educators since research and publication are central to the LIS academic responsibilities and development. Career advancement: The movement of an academic from one rank or position to another by appointment or promotion, or through other known academic pathways. Academic collaboration, research involvement and scholarly work can be the stepping stones for LIS educators who are aiming for their career growth as put by Saidu et al. (2024). This indicates that the publishing work could mean professional development and advancement of LIS educators.

The desire to publish can also pose problems, especially in the cases of academics who have limited research funds, have high publication fees, and must adhere to institutional guidelines for publications in certain journals. The recent focus on Scopus-indexed publications in Nigerian Universities has raised concerns about publication fees and career advancement, in the opinion of Adegbilero-Iwari et al. (2026). This is why it is worth exploring the correlation between publish-or-perish pressure and the publishing and promotion of LIS educators. In the context of this, this study looks at the publish or perish pressure, productivity in publishing and career advancement of Library and Information Science educators in universities in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Publication is a very critical requirement for academic appointment, promotion and career advancement in universities in Nigeria. Library and Information Science educators are thus expected to publish on a regular basis on the known scholarly channels. This has helped to drive the "publish or perish" mentality among academics. But the educator of LIS must balance between the demands of publications and teaching, supervision of research students, administration and other academic duties. Some educators may also not have the necessary resources to meet these expectations due to limited research funding, high publication costs, and insufficient research support and the demand for publications in recognised journals. These factors can impact both their publishing productivity and career development. While publications are seen to be the prerequisite to academic promotion, it is not clear enough how publication or publish or perish pressure have influenced the publication productivity and career growth of LIS educators in Nigerian universities. This gap requires the present study on publish-or-perish pressure, publication productivity and career advancement of Library and Information Science (LIS) educators in Nigerian Universities.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine publish-or-perish pressure, publication productivity and career advancement among Library and Information Science educators in Nigerian universities. The study specifically sought to:

1. determine the level of publish-or-perish pressure experienced by Library and Information Science educators in Nigerian universities;
2. determine the level of publication productivity among Library and Information Science educators in Nigerian universities;
3. examine the level of career advancement among Library and Information Science educators in Nigerian universities.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of publish-or-perish pressure experienced by Library and Information Science educators in Nigerian universities?
2. What is the level of publication productivity among Library and Information Science educators in Nigerian universities?
3. What is the level of career advancement among Library and Information Science educators in Nigerian universities?

Literature Review

Publish-or-Perish Pressure among University Academics

Publish-or-perish pressure is the expectation that academics must have a certain amount of research production and publish it to maintain their academic career and secure their academic positions. Requirements for appointments, promotion, tenure and professional recognition are often also linked to the pressure. Bello (2023) argued that the culture of publish-or-perish has become more institutionalised, making the output of research more significant, as well as making the rewards of research more significant than the rewards of teaching.

In Nigeria, publication pressure has been more noticeable in Universities due to the increased emphasis on publications in well-known and indexed journals. Adegbilero-Iwari et al. (2026) believe that journal articles are still a major product of academic work which is taken into consideration in the promotion and appointment of academic staffs in Nigerian Universities. They also found academics to have concerns about publication fees and disparities in research opportunities and institutional incentives.

The challenge as expressed by Adegoke (2025) is that the Nigeria university academics must handle the demands of publication in addition to their duties of teaching and research and service. Lack of infrastructure, insufficient funding, increased workload and publication demands can cause stress for academic employees, the study said. This is important for LIS educators since they are expected to have to perform both classroom teaching and supervision of students and at the same time engage in research and publications and other university duties.

Publication Productivity among LIS Educators and Academic Librarians

Publication productivity is the quantity and quality of scholarly output of an academic over a given time. It can be journal articles, conference papers, books, book chapters and other established research products. Iwu-James et al. (2024) noted that academic librarians' research productivity is both the number and quality of publications. In their research on academic librarians from South-West Nigeria, their overall findings were that they were not particularly high in terms of output of publications; Google Scholar was the top indexing platform being used.

According to Olanusi and Omotayo (2023), academic librarians' research productivity is affected by factors like the collaborative approach, motivation, access to information resources, conference sponsorship, and

flexible working arrangements. This indicates that productivity in publication cannot be regarded merely as an academic's individual effort as the institutional context can either facilitate or inhibit academic research.

Allahmagani et al (2024) determined that research skills impact research productivity among the librarians of public universities in North-West Nigeria. Likewise, according to Wagwu, Osuchukwu and Oladokun (2024), the information literacy skills also positively impact on research productivity of librarians in Nigerian university libraries, but they might face constraints of limited time and support from their institutions to improve the development of information literacy skills.

Another factor related to publication productivity is mentoring. Oso and Olaniyi (2024) stated that some factors that facilitated young librarians' research productivity in selected academic libraries in Oyo State included research funding and mentoring. Their research also indicated a strong correlation between mentoring and research productivity. In the same way, Omwanghe and Owolabi (2024) showed research mentoring as one of the factors linked with academic librarians' productivity in South-South Nigeria.

Career Advancement and Academic Publication

Career advancement is the advancement of academic staff from lower to higher levels of academic career progression by appointment, confirmation, promotion and other recognised academic processes. When carried out, scholarly publication is often one of the things that is considered. Omwanghe and Owolabi (2024) argued that research productivity is significant to academic librarians' recognition, promotion and career development.

For LIS educators, authorship can be a form of evidence for engagement in research and scholarly work. But, gaining promotion is not only determined by the number of publications, but also by the quality and type of journals that the published works appear in, and the status of these journals. The latest evidence from Nigerian Universities has shown that the importance of journal articles, especially articles published in recognised indexing systems, has grown in the academic appointment and promotion process. Collaboration is also applicable to academic librarians' research productivity, as pointed out by Iwu-James and Haliso (2023), which may provide opportunities for greater academic production. These partnerships can, therefore, help academics fulfil publication deadlines for advancement.

Theoretical Review

Expectancy Theory Victor Vroom (1964). This study is based on Expectancy Theory which was developed by Victor Vroom in 1964. According to the theory, the probability that people do an effort increases when they think that the effort will result in good performance, which in turn will result in a valued outcome. There are three elements to the theory: expectancy, instrumentality and valence. Expectancy is the expectancy for accomplishment, instrumentality is the expectancy for the reward for good performance, and the valence is the value of the reward. Because the publish-or-perish pressure, publication productivity and career advancement are related by academic expectations and rewards, it applies to Expectancy Theory. Educators who have strong beliefs that greater publication output will lead to promotion and advancement may allocate more time to research and publication. In this context, the theory serves as a foundation for the understanding of the possible effect of publish or perish pressure on publication productivity of LIS educators in Nigerian universities and the possible relationship between publication productivity and career advancement of LIS educators.

Empirical Review

Asemhokhai (2025) conducted research on the career progression dilemma in Nigerian universities: from publish or perish to visible or vanish. The study was able to demonstrate how academic career promotion is evolving in Nigerian universities and how the old paradigm of publish or perish has given way to the new one of visible or vanish. It examined the ramifications of this shift, the growing significance of research visibility, the effect on citations, and the significance of digital presence and worldwide rankings as a promotion factor. The visibility paradigm's goal is to increase Nigerian scholarship's visibility internationally, however there are obstacles like inadequate infrastructure and technology, predatory publishing, disciplinary inequalities, and local-global conflicts. The research is based on the Academic Capitalism Theory, which emphasizes the changing nature of expectations and performance in academia due to market imperatives and institutional changes. The results show that while increased visibility can contribute to a more competitive environment and to greater international integration, it can also increase inequality and undermine any significant academic progress if it is not supported properly and assessed with the help of inclusive frameworks. The study

ends with some recommendations that are actionable in creating a balance and sustainable career progression in the Nigerian higher education system.

Omwanghe and Owolabi's (2024) study looked at research mentoring as a predictor of academic librarians' research productivity at South-South Nigerian universities. Librarians' job growth, recognition, and promotion are all influenced by their research productivity. However, prior study has shown that South-South Nigerian librarians are not very productive in their research, which is a worry for university and library administration. Some studies have demonstrated that research mentoring can affect research output, even if previous research has examined bibliometric data of librarians' publications. However, the variable's impact on research output has not been fully measured in the literature. Thus, this study examined how academic librarians at South-South Nigerian universities' research output was affected by research mentorship (issue identification, literature search, collaboration, research design, and time management). Survey research was used as the research methodology for this study. 229 academic librarians from 30 South-South Nigerian universities participated in the survey. The study employed the total enumeration sample technique. A good structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. The reliability of each construct ranged from 0.82 to 0.88 (Cronbach's alpha). 86.4% was the rate of return. Data were analyzed at the 5% significance level using descriptive and inferential statistics (simple and multiple regression). The findings demonstrated that research mentorship significantly affected research output (Adj.R2 = 0.68, F(1, 198) = 439.50, p & 0.05). The study found that academic librarians' research productivity in south-south Nigerian universities was significantly influenced by research mentoring. In order to promote research output, it was also suggested that university administration establish an institutionalized research mentoring program.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive design. The study was carried out in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE), Rivers State, Nigeria and University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT), Rivers State, Nigeria. There are 32 Library and Information Science educators, which are divided into 16 educators by each university. The population was small and manageable hence the census sampling technique was used, and all the 32 educators were included in the study. A researcher developed questionnaire titled

"*Publish-or-Perish Pressure, Publication Productivity and Career Advancement Questionnaire (PPPCACQ)"* was used to gather data. The questionnaire included four parts covering the three main variables, which were measured using a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) rated 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was tested by experts in Library and Information Science at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education to test the clarity and relevance of the instrument. A pilot test was also carried out, and reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient at 0.70 which was deemed acceptable. The questionnaires were distributed to the selected respondents and collected once filled in. The data collected were analysed using SPSS version 29. The data were analyzed to answer the research questions using mean and standard deviation. A criterion for decision making was 2.50; scores below 2.50 were rejected, and scores of 2.50 or higher were accepted.

Results and Findings

Table 1: Summary of mean and standard deviation on the level of publish-or-perish pressure experienced by Library and Information Science educators in Nigerian universities.

S/N	Items	Mean score	S/D	Decision
1	I feel pressured to publish research regularly.	2.41	0.91	Disagreed
2	Publication is strongly required for my promotion.	2.81	0.83	Agreed
3	I feel pressured to publish in recognised journals.	2.75	0.86	Agreed
4	I worry about meeting my institution's publication requirements.	2.66	0.89	Agreed
5	I feel that failure to publish may affect my career.	2.78	0.84	Agreed
	Grand Mean/S/D	**2.68**	**0.87**	**Agreed**

Table 1 showed the mean and standard deviation of the publish-or-perish pressure faced by library and information science instructors in Nigerian universities. With a grand mean of 2.68 and a standard deviation of 0.87, the results exceed the criterion mean of 2.50. Specifically, the respondents disagreed that they feel pressured to publish research regularly, with a mean score of 2.41. However, they agreed that publication is strongly required for promotion (2.81), they feel pressured to publish in recognised journals (2.75), they worry about meeting their institution's publication requirements (2.66), and they feel that failure to publish may affect their

career (2.78). The findings indicated that although the educators may not always feel direct pressure to publish regularly, publication requirements, recognised journals, promotion expectations and possible career consequences contribute to publish-or-perish pressure among LIS educators.

Table 2: Summary of mean and standard deviation on the level of publication productivity among Library and Information Science educators in Nigerian universities.

S/N	Items	Mean score	S/D	Decision
1	I publish research articles regularly.	2.94	0.78	Agreed
2	I publish articles in recognised journals.	2.88	0.81	Agreed
3	I produce research publications annually.	2.91	0.79	Agreed
4	I collaborate with other researchers on publications.	3.03	0.76	Agreed
5	I publish in indexed journals.	2.84	0.83	Agreed
	Grand Mean/S/D	**2.92**	**0.79**	**Agreed**

Table 2 presents the mean and standard deviation of the level of publication productivity among Library and Information Science educators in Nigerian universities. Specifically, the respondents agreed that they publish research articles regularly, with a mean score of 2.94. They also agreed that they publish articles in recognised journals (2.88) and produce research publications annually (2.91). Collaboration with other researchers recorded the highest mean score of 3.03, indicating that collaborative research and publication are common among the educators. Similarly, the respondents agreed that they publish in indexed journals, with a mean score of 2.84. The findings indicated that the LIS educators demonstrate publication productivity through regular research publication, publication in recognised and indexed journals, annual research output, and collaboration with other researchers.

Table 3: Summary of mean and standard deviation on the level of career advancement among Library and Information Science educators in Nigerian universities

S/N	Items	Mean score	S/D	Decision
1	My publications have supported my promotion.	2.97	0.79	Agreed
2	My research output has improved my career progression.	2.91	0.81	Agreed
3	I have advanced in academic rank through promotion.	2.84	0.86	Agreed
4	My research achievements have increased my professional recognition.	3.03	0.75	Agreed

5	I have opportunities for further academic advancement.	2.88	0.83	Agreed
	Grand Mean/S/D	**2.93**	**0.81**	**Agreed**

Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation of the level of career advancement among Library and Information Science educators in Nigerian universities. Specifically, the respondents agreed that their publications have supported their promotion, with a mean score of 2.97. They also agreed that their research output has improved their career progression (2.91) and that they have advanced in academic rank through promotion (2.84). Research achievements increasing professional recognition recorded the highest mean score of 3.03, showing that research activities contribute to professional recognition among the educators. Similarly, the respondents agreed that they have opportunities for further academic advancement, with a mean score of 2.88. The findings revealed that career advancement among the LIS educators is reflected in promotion, progression in academic career, advancement in academic rank, professional recognition, and opportunities for further advancement.

Discussion of the Findings

The first result indicated that LIS educators were under pressure to publish or perish with a grand mean of 2.68. They want to publish for promotion (2.81), they feel pressured to publish in recognised journals (2.75), they are concerned about meeting institutional publication requirements (2.66), and they believe that not publishing could impact their career (2.78). They, however, did not agree that they feel pressured to publish research regularly (2.41). This result corroborates Adegbilero-Iwari et al. (2026) who found that in the Nigerian Universities, publication (specifically journal articles) holds significance for academics' appointment and promotion. It also supports the findings of Asemhe (2025), who identified the relationship between the two increasingly with the advancement of academic careers. The present findings, therefore, showed that publication pressure continues to be a major source of stress in the LIS profession.

The second was found to have a relatively high level of publication productivity, with a grand mean of 2.92. The educators also agreed with them published research articles regularly (2.94), published in recognised journals (2.88), published in indexed journals (2.84), produced publications annually (2.91) and collaborated with other researchers (3.03). The mean (3.03) was the highest for Collaboration. The result of this study corroborates the findings of Omwanghe

and Owolabi (2024) which revealed that, professional recognition, promotion and career advancement among academic librarians in South-South Nigeria's universities is dependent on research productivity. It's notable however, that it is not the same level of research productivity that was reported among librarians of South-South Nigerian federal universities by Friday, Ovwasa and Onyenwenu (2024). These differences might be due to population differences and/or expectations of institutional research.

The third finding indicated that LIS educators had a high mean score of career advancement was 2.93. They have agreed that publications have helped their promotion (2.97); their research has helped with career progression (2.91); that they have promoted in their academic ranks (2.84); that they have been encouraged in their profession through research (3.03), and that they have further scope for career advancement (2.88). The finding was consistent with that of Asemhe (2025) who noted that visibility and publication are crucial factors that influence the academic careers of researchers. It is also an aid to Adegbilero-Iwari et al. (2026), who established the role played by publications in Journal in promoting academics in Nigerian Universities. Likewise, Omwanghe and Owolabi (2024) noted that research productivity is a factor that aids in recognition, promotion and career progression. This finding thus validates that research and publication are integral parts of career development of LIS educators.

Conclusion

The study found that publish-or-perish pressure and publication productivity and promotion are influential factors of the academic life of the Library and Information Science educators in Nigerian universities. The results indicated that the educators suffered from "publish or perish" syndrome, especially related to promotion, expectation to publish in a recognised journal, and the career impact of not publishing. The study also confirmed the high productivity of the educators, as they regularly publish, they publish annually and they co-publish and publish in recognized and indexed journals in a year. The study also revealed that the educators achieved promotion, career progression, academic promotion, academic recognition and opportunities for further academic development. The results indicate that the publication activities have a close relationship with the advancement of careers of LIS educators. The study thus emphasizes that an academic environment conducive to academic research and publications should be provided and academic publication goals should be

realistic and supportive of the other teaching, research and service duties of the LIS educators.

Recommendations

1. Universities should reduce unnecessary publish-or-perish pressure by providing adequate research support.
2. Universities should provide funding and resources to improve LIS educators' publication productivity.
3. Universities should recognise research and publication achievements in promotion and career advancement.

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