Motivation and encumbrances to research and publication: The case of Nigerian library and information science (LIS) practitioners

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Accepted 12 February, 2008

The survey was carried out to determine the research and publication output of Library and Information Science (LIS) practitioners in Nigeria; and their motivation and impediments to research and publication. It was aimed at providing the reality of the opinion on low research and publication output of LIS practitioners including the factors that motivate and hinder their research and publication efforts. A fourteen (14) item questionnaire was designed, trial tested and distributed to one hundred and eighty (180) of the four hundred and thirty seven practitioners who attended the 44th Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Nigerian Library Association held at Abuja, 18th – 22nd June 2006. One hundred and sixty (88.9%) of the distributed questionnaires were completed and returned. The results were analyzed and presented using means, percentages and tables. A 50% benchmark was considered as positive opinion for responses on percentage scale. The results of the survey revealed that LIS practitioners in Nigeria are not conducting enough research and thus submitted and published 3.92 and 2.41 articles each in the last ten years respectively. Though they are more active research-wise in the last 2 years than the preceding 8 years, 83.43% of their articles were published in Nigeria than 16.58% published in foreign journals. The desire to get promotion, solve problems arising in the course of their work and inspiration are their major motivation for research. Practitioners with Ph.D degree also consider availability of fund and self visibility important motivating factors for publication. Time constraints, poor research skills and lack of fund are the main impediments to LIS practitioners’ research and publication. However employees of public and national libraries; and Ordinary National Diploma/ Higher National Diploma (OND/HND) and Bachelor of Science (BSc) qualification groups regarded lack of inspiration and high rate of articles rejection as factors that impede their research and publication.

Key word: Research and Publication Nigeria, Publication Output LIS Professionals, Library and Information Science Research, Research and Publication Motivation, Research Impediments.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of research and publication in the growth and development of Library and Information Science (LIS) profession cannot be over emphasized. Most importantly is its place in problem solving given the dynamism in the LIS operations and services resulting from the changing times and environment. Stressing the importance of research to LIS practitioners and the profession, Powell and Mika (2002) informed that ‘it is needed to improve problem solving and decision making in the workplace, to make professional practitioners critical consumers of the research literature, and to better equip librarians to provide optimal information services to researchers in other field. To buttress that Boaduo and Babitseng (2007) noted that research has always been the main approach to problem solving by all categories of professionals right from the ancient time. Though research and publication as noted by Alemna (1998) and Aina (2004) are needed for the expansion of LIS frontiers.

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and for finding solution to problems emanating from its practice, it also benefits LIS practitioners. Montanelli and Stenstrom (1986) proffers that in addition to helping to address the complexities of managing efficient and effective library services, research promotes advancement and recognition for librarians and librarians who conduct research are likely to be more receptive to changes and have more effective relationship with other faculty. In affirmation, Powell et al. (2002) informed that research is necessary for LIS practitioners to:

1. Create new knowledge and contribute to the growth of LIS as a profession.
2. Improve problem solving and decision making in work place.
3. Be critical consumer of research literature.
4. Help equip libraries for optimal information services to other researchers.

Powell (1997) maintained that research and publication help individuals to think critically and analytically. Swisher (1986) also informed that research is an essential means of knowing “a way of making better practical decision that is the responsibility of each of us”.

The benefits of research and publication notwithstanding, LIS practitioners are motivated to engage in research for various reasons. Ochai and Nedosa (1998) advanced that research is motivated by:

1. Eagerness or enthusiasm to publish.
2. Presence of enabling environment.
3. Self perception of individual LIS professional with respect to his role.

Such self perception, according to Avemeriautulu (2005), is a product of education and skill acquired at the early days of professional practice which also determines the ability to produce scholarly papers. He also noted that one of the motivating factors for scholarly publications by LIS professional is the availability of publications which contain the needed languages for publication and how to use them. Mabanonku (2005) informed that LIS professionals are motivated to publish especially in oversea journals to enhance their visibility and satisfy the need of their employers as in universities in Nigeria which place much importance to oversea journals. Butler (1991) and Mularski and Bradigam (1991) informed that academic librarians publish to meet the promotion and tenure demands of their institution to attain the faculty status. This is confirmed by White and Monemee (1978) in their study where PhD graduates attributed their motivation for research to its being a requirement by their employer.

Regardless of some of the motivational factors, research and opinions reveal that LIS practitioners do not engage in adequate research. The later was acknowledged by Cullen (1998) and Molholt (1998). Aina (2006) acknowledged that before now LIS professionals were at the forefront of LIS research. Hence Raptis (1992) in his earlier work found that LIS professionals in Nigeria rank among the 10 leading producers of LIS research in the world. Also research by Uzun (2002) as noted by Aina (2004) placed LIS professionals in Nigeria first among the 76 countries with 96 articles between 1980 and 1989. However Aina (2004) proffered that the trend has changed. With respect to other African countries Manda (2000) reported that librarians at the University of Dar es Salaam are not conducting enough research and thus published less. According to him only 70 research reports were submitted by 22 staff between 1982 and 1999 with a wide range of difference of between 0 – 18. Only 51 articles were published with an average of 2.7 articles per librarian for 17 years. Msuya (2005) opined that the state of research and publishing in LIS in East African is very low. According to him few renowned professionals publish a lot whereas many others publish very little. Study by Sendikakawa (2005) in East African public universities also confirmed very low level of publishing.

Low research output was also observed before now in USA and Canada. Powell, Barker and Mika (2002) found out that LIS practitioners are not heavily involved in research. Though 90% of them read at least one research journal, only 42% perform research occasionally or frequently which are related to their job.

Literature is replete on the encumbrances to research and publication by LIS practitioners. Powell (1997) postulates that despite the benefit of research and publication to LIS practitioners, they are not conducting enough research. Among the reasons for poor research attitude by LIS practitioners according to Waldhart (1980) is that practitioners “fail to understand the purpose of research, its limitation or how it might be effectively used”. Blick (1984) positioned that LIS practitioners believed that research is lacking in practical application or mission orientation. Onohwakpor and Tiemo (2006) summarized the limitation as ignorance on where to publish and the acceptable journals. White and Monemee (1978) identified lack of interest. Many studies attributed the low research and publication output of LIS practitioners to poor education which hinder the acquisition of adequate research and writing skills and identification of research problems (Blick, 1984; Aina, 1997; Ochai and Nedosa, 1998; Powell et al., 2002; Avemariautulu, 2005).

Another important factor is time. Swisher (1986) noted that practitioners are always engaged in their daily routine than doing research. Black and Leysen as cited by Ochai and Nedosa (1998) emphasized the conflict LIS practitioners have between services to library users and the expectation to publish and lack of release time for the academic librarian. The view was confirmed by Onohwakpor and Tiemo (2006). On the other hand Avemariautulu (2005) noted that editors’ attitude to paper emanating from emerging LIS professionals discourage them from further research and publication. Again Blick (1984) and Sedikadiwa (2005) included lack of funds as part of encumbrances to research and publication. Moahi (2007)
in addition to indicating lack of fund also endorsed lack of time and inadequate research skill as part of the hindrances. Basker (1985) proffered some of the ways of improving research and publication output of LIS practitioners to include:

1. Assisting librarians in identifying ideas for research.
2. Mentoring by an experience researcher.
3. Financial support.
4. Providing time out for research.
5. Reward for timely completion of research.
6. Encouragement to apply the result of the research.
7. Assisting librarians in matching research projects with personal development.

Powell et al. (1997) suggested that LIS education, professional association and librarians should help in preparing practitioners to conduct and critically consume research. Employees can also provide reward and incentive in the areas of staff development; release sabbatical/special leaves etc.

**Statement of the problem**

Research and publication have been identified as the life wires of all professions as they contribute to their growth and development. Although many researches have been carried out on research and publication output of LIS practitioners, most of such researches were made in the USA and Europe (Bliek, 1984; Mulaski and Bradiga, 1991; Raptis, 1992). Studies made in Africa were predominantly in South Africa, many of which are case studies (Manda, 2000; Msuya, 2005). Literature on research and publication pattern in Nigeria has been sparse especially with reference to motivating factors and encumbrances. Preliminary study carried out in many of the regions in Nigeria shows a low research output. Again majority of the researches in African countries as conducted by Manda (2000) and Msuya (2005) show that LIS practitioners do not carry out enough research and hence do not publish enough. Therefore there is the need to carry out a survey to confirm such prevalence in Nigeria, find out the reason for the low research output with a view to addressing the problem. Hence the problem put in question form is: what are the motivation and impediments to research and publication output of LIS professionals in Nigeria?

**Objective of the study**

The study sought to ascertain the motivation and impediments to research and publication output of LIS professionals in Nigeria. Specifically is designed to:

1. Identify the research and publication output of LIS practitioners in Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the motivating factors for LIS practitioners re-
3. Find out the encumbrances to LIS practitioners’ research and publication.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide the work:

1. What is the average research and publication output of LIS practitioners in Nigeria?
2. What was the percentage of LIS practitioners’ publication is made in foreign journal?
3. What are the motivating factors to research and publication by LIS practitioners in Nigeria?
4. What are the hindrances to Nigeria’s LIS practitioners’ research and publication?

**Significance of the study**

The result of the study will help LIS stakeholders to appreciate the reality of opinions on low research and publication output of LIS practitioners in Nigeria. Based on that confirmation, library managers and educators will review their operations and curriculum to create the enabling and motivating environment for research and address the impediments to research and publication as revealed in the study. LIS practitioners on accessing the result of this research will endeavour to dispose themselves to the motivating factors to research as presented in the research. They will also develop strategies towards overcoming the impediments to effective research. Some of these strategies are listed in the recommendations.

**Scope of the study**

The study focused on all library and information science (LIS) practitioners in Nigeria. These include LIS educators and practitioners working in public, special, academic and national libraries. The survey is restricted to research and journal article publication output with emphasis on the factors motivating and the impediments to research and publication output of LIS practitioners.

**Method of research**

The study was carried out during the 44th Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Nigeria Library Association held at Abuja the Capital of Nigeria on 18th – 22nd June, 2006. The work employed descriptive survey research method to gather data using questionnaire instrument. Questionnaire instrument was used as it is considered appropriate to elicit data from opinion. A 14 item questionnaire was designed; trial tested using LIS practitioners in Imo State Nigeria. Using a random sampling method, the questionnaire was distributed to one hundred and eighty (180) of the four hundred and thirty seven (437) practitioners who attended the Conference. The questionnaire was designed to reflect the place of employment, the rank/designation, number of years of service and academic qualification of LIS professionals. The num-
Table 1. Research articles submitted and published by Nigerian LIS practitioners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Average Per LIS practitioner</th>
<th>% Published</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articles Submitted</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article Published</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>61.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Disposition of LIS practitioners’ publication with reference to the place and time of publication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N = 140</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Average Per LIS practitioner</th>
<th>% Published</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articles Submitted</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>16.569</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign journals</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>83.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigerian journals</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>54.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published the remaining 8 years</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>42.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the data collected to find answers to the questions on the research and publication output of LIS practitioners, their motivation and constraints to research and publish are presented below.

Research and publication output

The respondents were required to indicate the number of journal articles submitted for publication and the number published in the last ten years. The result is presented in Table 1. The Table shows that of the 550 articles submitted by 140 sampled LIS practitioners in the last ten years, 338 (61.45%) was published representing an average of 3.92 and 2.41 submitted and published by each of the practitioner. (They are presented under recommendation)

Publications made in foreign journals

Respondents were requested to indicate the number of articles published in foreign or Nigerian journals and the number published within the last two (2) and ten (10) years respectively. The result is presented in Table 2. It shows that 56 (16.56%) of the 338 published articles were made in foreign journal while the rest 282 (83.43%) were made in Nigerian journals. This represented an average of 0.4 and 2.01 publication from each practitioner in foreign and Nigerian journal respectively. Also 184 (54.43%) of the total publication made in 10 years were made in last 2 years. Hence the remaining 144 articles were published in the preceding 8 years. Thus each of the practitioners published an average of 1.31 articles in the last 2 years and 1.02 in the preceding 8 years.

Motivation for research and publishing

The results on the factors that motivate LIS practitioners to publish are presented in Table 3. It shows that 52.85% of them research and publish to solve problems arising from their operations, 51.42% publish to gain promotion, 40% research and publish as a result of inspiration. Other factors namely; availability of fund and self visibility are considered less important motivational factors hence the 8.57 and 24.28% responses respectively.

Furthermore, motivation to research and publish is revealed to be influenced by the LIS practitioners' academic qualification as shown in the Table. The practitioners with PhD publish for self visibility in addition to the need to get promotions, and solve operational problems. The later is an important motivating factor for the Masters Degree holders practitioners. The OND/ HND group undertake research and publish primarily when inspired to do so. For the BSc. group, research and publication is important primarily to gain promotion. Other factors though are important but not as the former. The availability of fund and inspiration also motivate PhD holders to research and publish (You could have added suggestions and recommendations towards solving this problem here so that in your summary and conclusion you just do cross referencing).

Encumbrances

The respondents were required to indicate some of the impediments to their research and publication efforts. The results presented in Tables 4 and 5 shows that their ma-
Table 3. Motivation for research and publication by LIS practitioners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>% Total Response</th>
<th>% OND/HND n=14</th>
<th>% BSc n = 23</th>
<th>% MSc n = 92</th>
<th>%Ph.D. n = 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>51.42</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>52.17</td>
<td>56.52</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of fund</td>
<td>8.57</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.69</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>52.85</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>34.78</td>
<td>63.04</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Visibility</td>
<td>24.28</td>
<td>14.28</td>
<td>26.08</td>
<td>21.73</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiration</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>57.14</td>
<td>8.69</td>
<td>47.82</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Encumbrances to LIS practitioner research and publication based on their place of employment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Encumbrance</th>
<th>Total % Response</th>
<th>Place of employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Academic n = 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Lack of fund</td>
<td>57.14</td>
<td>65.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Poor responses</td>
<td>27.14</td>
<td>28.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Lack of inspiration</td>
<td>22.14</td>
<td>6.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Inadequate literature</td>
<td>55.00</td>
<td>52.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>High rate of article rejection</td>
<td>49.28</td>
<td>43.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Time Constants</td>
<td>67.85</td>
<td>65.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Poor Research Skills</td>
<td>60.71</td>
<td>65.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Encumbrances to LIS practitioner research and publication based on their academic qualification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Encumbrance</th>
<th>Total % Response</th>
<th>Qualification groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>OND Group n = 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Lack of fund</td>
<td>57.14</td>
<td>71.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Poor responses</td>
<td>27.14</td>
<td>28.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Lack of inspiration</td>
<td>22.14</td>
<td>71.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Inadequate literature</td>
<td>55.00</td>
<td>71.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>High rate of article rejection</td>
<td>49.28</td>
<td>85.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Time Constants</td>
<td>67.85</td>
<td>35.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Poor Research Skills</td>
<td>60.71</td>
<td>71.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The revelation that practitioners were able to submit and publish 3.92 and 2.41 articles respectively in 10 years confirms that the findings of low research and publication by Manda (2000) and Msuya (2005) in the University of Dares Salaam and East Africa is also applicable in Nigeria. Having published more of their work in the past two years is a sign that the practitioners are becoming active.

**DISCUSSION OF MAJOR FINDINGS**

The revelation that practitioners were able to submit and publish 3.92 and 2.41 articles respectively in 10 years confirms that the findings of low research and publication by Manda (2000) and Msuya (2005) in the University of Dares Salaam and East Africa is also applicable in Nigeria. Having published more of their work in the past two years is a sign that the practitioners are becoming active.
Table 6. Cross tabulation of % response to impediments to research by LIS practitioners based on place of employment and academic qualification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Encumbrances</th>
<th>Place of employment</th>
<th>Academic qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Lack of fund</td>
<td>65.88</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Poor Response</td>
<td>27.06</td>
<td>19.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Lack of inspiration</td>
<td>45.37</td>
<td>27.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Inadequate Literature</td>
<td>66.58</td>
<td>60.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>High rate of article rejection</td>
<td>58.78</td>
<td>59.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Time Constraints</td>
<td>70.34</td>
<td>51.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Poor research skills</td>
<td>77.21</td>
<td>69.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

lately. This could also be as a result of the full academic status assigned to LIS professionals in the late 1990s which insist on publish or perish syndrome. The employers of LIS practitioners and the professional associations should identify the variables responsible for the awakened interest in publication and reinforce them. In that way they will aid in nurturing their development as positioned by Hernon and Schwartz (2002). The low publication in foreign journals implies that the practitioners are either not aware of the international journals to publish or that the produced articles fall short of the standard required by foreign editors and publishers. The former result is consistent with the findings of Adekins and Budd (2006) on U.S LIS professionals; and He and Wang (2006) on Chinese which shows increase publication. However low standard which must have informed rejection of article is contrary to what obtained in China. Where such is the case there is the need to review education curriculum of LIS to strengthen information sourcing and research skills. The poor awareness which could inform less publication in foreign journal is a confirmation of Neal’s (2006) views that librarianship is an “information poor” information profession. Decisions are routinely not supported by the evidence of well-designed investigations. Research in the field is poorly communicated, understood, and applied.

The need for promotion, to solve problems and inspiration as the major motivation for research and publication is synonymous with the popular opinion and findings of Ochai and Medossa (1998), White and Momenee (1978) and Mabawonku (2005) who also confirmed that LIS professionals publish for self visibility. The consideration of fund and self visibility as major motivating factors to research and publication by PhD holders is explained by the desire at that level to engage in cost intensive research and to make them known for political and international engagements. Promotion and problem solving are very important motivating factors for BSc, MSc and PhD groups but not the OND group who, in most cases, do not require publication for promotion and may not find themselves in leadership positions that necessitate challenges demanding solutions through research and publication.

Time constraints as an encumbrance to confirms the position of Swishe (1986), Ochai and Medosa (1998) and Onohwakpor and Tieno (2006) that routine of LIS practitioners do not allow them ample time to conduct research. Research I believe requires concentration which may elude practitioners who always have one or more interactions with information center users. Lack of research skill is also upheld by Aina (1997), Ochai and Medossa (1998) and Mika (2002). The later is an indication that LIS schools in the Country may not be providing the students with adequate skill for research and publication. Review of Curriculum may solve this problem. Only PhD group (Table 5) does not consider poor research skill as an impediment. This means that at PhD level, LIS practitioners have acquired adequate skills for research and publication. Public and National libraries and the OND/HND group do not consider lack of inspiration as an impediment because in most cases low responsibility does not arouse challenges which invariably engender inspiration. Also the OND/HND and BSc groups may not have acquired the ways and means of publication hence the tendency of their articles being rejected.

Summary of findings and conclusion

Research and publication are life wires of any profession. Thus it is logical to measure the efforts and problems of the members of the profession with reference to their research and publication to increase the capacity of the profession. In view of that, the survey brought the following to the fore:

LIS practitioners in Nigeria are not conducting adequate research and thus submitted and published 3.92 and 2.41 articles each in the last ten years respectively. Though they are more active research-wise in the last 2 years than the preceding 8 years, 83.43% of their articles were published in Nigeria than 16.58% published in foreign journals.

The desire to get promotion, solve problems arising in the course of their work and inspiration are their major motivation for research. Practitioners with PhD degree also consider availability of fund and self visibility important motivating factors for publication.
Time constraints, poor research skills and lack of fund are the main impediments to LIS practitioners’ research and publication. However employees of public and national libraries; and OND/HND and BSc qualification groups regard lack of inspiration and high rate of articles rejection as factors that impede research and publication. Engender

Recommendation

Based on the findings, it is recommended that:

LIS professional associations and journal publishers in Nigeria should organize workshops and seminars on the whys, how and when of research and publishing towards the growth and development of individuals and the Profession; Library and information science educators should always review their curriculum to accommodate new research skills and methods.

Since promotion, inspiration and career challenges are motivational factors to LIS research and publication; LIS employers should introduce publication as one of the requirements for promotion in other to engender research in such professionals. Further more, practitioners should be deployed regularly to expose the new challenges.

Release time should be provided for LIS professional irrespective of the establishment to allow adequate time for critical thinking that could encourage research.

Professional associations could also help to sponsor research while LIS professionals should solicit for research grants.

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