

The Pains and Gains of the Publication Requirement: a Survey of Librarians at Delta State University, Nigeria

J.E. Onohwakpor

P.A. Tiemo

**University Library
Delta State University
Abraka, Nigeria**

Introduction

Placing librarians on academic status in universities is a universal phenomenon. It started in the United States in the 1940s and spread to Britain and Canada through the 1980s, after a struggle by librarians in those countries. This has created many unanticipated developments and new problems needing solutions. A body of literature emerged and is still growing as the ramifications of the status have continued to be investigated. The literature of the past reveals a different perspective on the issues of academic status, ranging from implementation, attitudes of teaching faculty, publications and higher degrees opportunities (gains), and responsibilities and problems (pains).

This paper is limited to Delta State University library. Delta State University changed to a university from an advanced teacher's college in 1992. When this transition occurred, the majority of librarians had bachelor's degrees and were employed as assistant librarians with no professional skills. They were to be upgraded to librarian II after completing a master's degree in library studies. The reverse was the case, when in 1993 the National University Commission (NUC) issued a circular directing all librarians in Federal Universities should be accorded academic status in appointment and promotions (Ochai, 1998). The designation "assistant librarian" was changed to "graduate assistant." This therefore nullified the possibility of being promoted from Assistant Librarian to Librarian II.

Since the directive was mandatory and it took immediate effect, librarians since that year began to enjoy the basic privileges that had been reserved for teaching faculty. The privileges which constitute the gains of academics for librarians, include:

- Study leave with pay
- Separate academic salary scale (UASS)
- Extended retirement age of 65 years
- Conference attendance
- Research grants
- Sabbatical leave

As the saying goes, you cannot eat your cake and have it, and these benefits were accompanied with new expectations. The requirements needed to qualify for these benefits constitute the pains of the new status. These new requirements include:

- Bachelor's degree
- Research and publication in recognized professional journals
- Advanced degree (masters and PhD degrees compulsory).

The publication requirement is an entirely new one. Previously, librarians had only three requirements for promotion:

- 2-3 years since the last promotion
- Availability of vacancies
- Satisfactory performance

The Problem

Academic status had caused some setbacks for librarians. It appears as if the gains have been swallowed up by the pains. The question is: do the gains justify the pains? Why is it so difficult for the librarians to meet the publication requirements? Are librarians adequately prepared academically and professional for academic status? These and many issues constitute the kernel of this study.

The requirements for promotion of academic librarians are similar to those of teaching staff. The argument for not having different set of guidelines is based on the following assumptions:

- Librarians receive the same benefits as teaching faculty.
- Librarians perform professional and academic services.
- The necessary facilities to complete research, publication, and higher degrees are open to them.

New Requirements For Promotion

- Graduate assistant librarian must have masters degree in library and information within two years of employment to move to assistant librarian
- To move to Librarian II, Assistant Librarians must have a master's in library and information science with one publication in a reputable journal.
- For promotion to Librarian I, a master's in library and information science, four publications, and three years since last promotion.
- For promotion to senior librarian, a PhD in library and information science, eight publications, and three years since last promotion.
- For promotion to deputy librarian, a PhD, eight publications, and three years since last promotion.
- For promotion to university librarian, which is the equivalent of Professor, sixteen publications, with 10% percent of the publications appearing in foreign journals (Ahmadu, 2004).

Objective

The main objective of this paper is to establish the extent to which librarians in Delta State University have coped with their academic status since the inception of the "publish or perish" requirement.

Methodology

This article is based on the questionnaire designed by Omoniwa (2003), with modifications by the researchers for librarians who are the respondents. Data collected were analysed in percentages.

Sample

Twenty librarians from the rank of graduate assistant to senior librarian, which is the highest rank in the library at the time of this study, formed the sample for this study.

Result of Findings

Table I: Years of experience

Years	Respondents	Percentages
1 - 5	3	15%
6 - 10	4	20%
11 - 15	10	50%
16 - 20	2	10
Over 20	1	5
Total	20	100%

Fifty percent of the respondents had working experience of 11 - 15 years in the university library.

Table 2: Present designation

Years	Respondents	Percentages
Graduate Assistant	4	20%
Assistant Librarian	4	20%
Librarian III	10	50%
Librarian I	1	5%
Senior Librarian	1	5%
Total	20	100%

Table 2: Ranks. Four (20%) are Graduate Assistant, four (20%) are Assistant Librarian, and ten (50%) are Librarian II. There is just one (5%) Librarian I and one Senior Librarian.

Table 3: years of last promotion.

Last promotion	Respondents	Percentages
3 years	2	10%
3 - 5 years	4	20%
6 - 10 years	5	25
10 years and above	19	45%
Total	20	100%

Table 3: Forty five percent of academic staff in the library have not received a promotion for ten years or more.

Table 4: Reasons for the delay in promotion.

Reasons	Respondents	Percentages
Not dedicated to duty	-	-
Insufficient publication	12	60
Lack of higher degree	5	25
Not due	3	15
Total	20	100%

Sixty percent of the respondents failed to get promoted due to lack of publications, while 25% lack higher degrees.

Table 5: staff attitude to work due to publications.

Table 5: Do the publication criteria affect your attitude toward work?

Option	Respondents	Percentages
--------	-------------	-------------

Yes	13	65%
No	4	20%
Not indicated	3	15
Total	20	100%

Sixty five percent of academic staff devote less time to their responsibilities in the library because of the struggle to publish papers that will earn them promotion. This affected the pace of library automation, which began in 2001.

The rating of journals by the Appraisal and Promotion Committee (APC) had an effect on decisions about where to publish

Table 6: Effect of journal rating.

Options	Respondents	Percentages
Yes	14	70%
Not	4	20
Not indicated	2	10
Total	20	100%

Seventy percent of the respondents do not have enough journal publications because of the rating of journals in librarianship. State journals, which are easily accessible to library academic staff, are rejected by the Appraisal and Promotion Committee (APC).

Having knowledge of journal titles have also affected academic librarians' publications. The table below shows knowledge of journals in the field.

Table 7: Do you have knowledge of journal titles.

Options	Respondents	Percentages
Yes	5	25%

Not	12	60%
Not indicated	3	15
Total	20	100%

Sixty percent of academic librarians do not have knowledge of journal titles that are accepted by the APC. The library do not subscribe to foreign journals in librarianship. How does one publish, when there is no reading?

Conference attendance contributes to continuing education. A lot of importance is attached to conferences or seminars attended by academics.

Table 8: Last conference attended.

Options	Respondents	Percentages
Never attended	3	15%
2 years ago	2	10%
3 years ago	1	5%
5 years ago	8	40%
Over 5 years	6	30%

The table shows that 40% of the respondents have not attended conferences for the past five years. Conferences are very expensive. Administrative support for attending conferences would enhance librarians' research and publication ability.

Findings

- Librarians in Delta State University library generally do not have the number of publications that are required for promotion
- Librarians do not have enough knowledge of journal titles in their profession.
- There is little professional connection to others since most of the librarians do not attend conferences.
- The daily routines of the library demand a lot of time, leaving little time to read, research, and publish.

Conclusion

Academic librarians in Delta State University library are not satisfied with the criteria for promotion. University library leadership has an obligation to their younger colleagues to provide the necessary materials and opportunities to attend conferences and seminars. The list of approved journals is unnecessarily restrictive.

Works Cited

Ahmadu, A.B. (2004) Requirement for the appointments of university librarians in Nigeria universities. *Gateway Library Journals*. 7(2):89

Ochai, A. (1998) Publication output of libraries: the search for alternative justifications. *African Journal of Library and Information Science*. 8(2):90

Omoniwa, M.A. (2003). Twenty years of academic status (1983-2003) for libraries in Ahmadu Bello University library system. *Nigeria Libraries* 37(1):60-66

QUESTIONNAIRE

The researcher is carrying a survey on academic Librarian perception on Publication on as a major criteria for promotion.

Please tick as applicable

1. PERSONAL DATA

Years - 20 - 25

26 - 30

36 - 40

46 - 50

56 - 60

Above 60

2. SEX

MALE

FEMALE

3. QUALIFICATION

BLS

MLS

Ph.D

4. POST QUALIFICATION WORKING EXPERIENCE YEARS

1 - 5

6 - 10

11 - 15

16 - 20

Over 20

5. Which is your present designation?

Graduate Assistant

Assistant Librarian

Librarian II

Librarian I

Senior Librarian

Deputy Librarian

6. How long have you been on this post?

1 - 2 years

3 - 5 "

6 - 10 "

Above 10 "

Others please specify

7. Are you satisfied with the years of waiting on your present post?

Yes

No

8. Reasons for Delay in promotion

Not dedicated to duty

- Insufficient Publication
- Lack of higher degree
- Lack of vacancy

Others please specify

9. Does the Publication Criteria affect your attitude to work? Yes No

10. Which of the following reasons motivates you to publish and obtain a higher degree?

To earn promotion

- To contribute to knowledge
- For pleasure

11. Which of the following reasons is hindrance to lack of required publication for your promotion.

- Weak/Poor research orientation
- Too much demand by daily work in the library
- Lack of academic freedom

- Rating of journal titles
- Lack of interest

12. **Have you published in the last 2 years?** Yes No

13. **Do you have enough knowledge of journal titles in your discipline?**

Yes / No

14. **Does the rating of Journal Titles pose some Discouragement to your publication?**

Yes / No

15. **Please give the names of Journal titles in which you have your publications.**

.....

16. **When last you attended Conferences?**

Not attended

2 years ago

3 years ago

5 years ago

Over 5 years ago