



Librarians' Contribution to Open Access Journal Publishing in Library and Information Science From the Perspective of Authorship



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ABSTRACT

This study focused on librarian authors of open access articles in the field of library and information science (LIS). Of 19 LIS OA journals and 1819 research articles published between 2008 and 2013, half of the authors (55.6%) worked in libraries and approximately one third were researchers (33.5%). No appreciable changes were observed in the annual distributions of authors' occupations. Regarding the types of collaboration, 53.7% of all articles were coauthored and primarily resulted from collaborations among librarians. The coauthored articles written by librarians and researchers accounted for the second-most prevalent type of collaboration; the highest increase was identified in the annual percentage of articles resulting from collaboration between librarians and researchers. This confirms that librarians engage in increasingly frequent interaction with researchers.

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INTRODUCTION

Researchers in research institutes, especially faculty members in universities, are the main contributors of scientific knowledge, because their job responsibilities are highly related to research and publication. This implies that practitioners play a minor role in research. However, librarians, the main practitioners in the field of library and information science (LIS), are active scientific contributors. Numerous studies have reported that librarian authors were the main contributors in articles of certain LIS journals (Buttler, 1991; Chapman & Pike, 1993; Herson, Smith, & Croxen, 1993; Krausse & Sieburth, 1985; Olsgaard & Olsgaard, 1980; Watson, 1985). A close relationship has been demonstrated between librarians and the creation of LIS knowledge.

Research and publishing are requirements for faculty members in universities. The same requirements also apply to academic librarians with faculty status and determine their evaluation and promotion under certain circumstances (Bolin, 2008; Gillum, 2010; Opoku, 2013; Salaam & Onifade, 2009). In 1972, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) approved a statement on the faculty status of academic librarians and reaffirmed it in 2001 and 2007 (American Library Association, 2014a). The ACRL's Standards for Faculty Status of Academic Librarians indicated that librarians with faculty status have the same privileges and responsibilities as faculty members do (American Library Association, 2014b). Since the statement was approved, libraries have granted faculty status to librarians engaging in research. In addition to libraries in the United States (Bolin, 2008; Hosburgh, 2011; Parker, 2011), those in other countries, including Ghana (Opoku, 2013), Nigeria (Salaam & Onifade, 2009), Sri Lanka

(Jayasundara, 2011), and Pakistan (Ameen & Ullah, 2013), grant academic librarians faculty status or consider doing so. This may explain why academic librarians exhibit higher research activity than do librarians in other types of libraries (Norelli & Harper, 2013; Watson, 1985). Under such circumstances, evaluation, promotion, and tenure naturally become the primary factors encouraging librarians to publish (Ameen & Ullah, 2013; Balczunas & Gordon, 2012; Carter, Snyder, & Imre, 2007; Fox, 2007; Jayasundara, 2011; Mitchell & Swieszkowski, 1985; Park & Riggs, 1993). The expected results, namely the increase in the number of publications by librarians, have positive impacts on librarians, such as improvement of library services through information sharing, enhancement of professional knowledge, and increases in collaboration with other researchers (Perkins & Slowik, 2013).

Among numerous criteria for evaluating researchers' performance, publications are assigned the highest weight in numerous disciplines (Salaam & Onifade, 2009). Prestigious peer-reviewed journals and monographs are valued the most among various forms of publications in most disciplines (Carotenuto, Lapegna, Zollo, Donato, & Nicholais, 2001; Ho, 1998). Although open access (OA) publishing has become a potential path for digital scholarly communication, and an increasing number of OA journals was observed (Björk, Laakso, & Solomon, 2013), most researchers favor traditional subscription-based journals with an established reputation. It is evident that peer review and journal reputation are the two most essential factors for authors in choosing journals for publication according to related studies (Coonin, 2011; Coonin & Younce, 2009, 2010; Rowlands & Nicholas, 2005; Taylor & Francis Group, 2014). Numerous surveys have reported that some researchers doubt the quality, influence, or reputation of OA journals (Coonin, 2011; Swan & Brown, 2004; Taylor & Francis Group, 2013, 2014; Xia, 2010). However, OA publishing has changed over time, most OA journals are peer reviewed, and some journals receive a higher

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impact factor than those of traditional journals. In addition, researchers have become more aware of OA publishing and support OA journals (Morris & Thorn, 2009; TBI Communications, 2014; Xia, 2010). However, the misunderstanding of researchers that the peer review quality of OA journals is low may explain why researchers do not think that their careers would benefit from publishing in OA journals (Coonin, 2011; Coonin & Younce, 2010; Opoku, 2013).

Therefore, we expect that authors including librarian authors prefer to publish their work in traditional prestigious journals. However, certain advantages of OA journals and other motivations encourage authors to publish in OA journals. These advantages include high visibility and wide dissemination; in addition, the quality of OA journals has been improving (Nariani & Fernandez, 2012; Schroter, Tite, & Smith, 2005). In addition, librarians are advocates of OA publication. Thus, the influence of OA journals on publishing by librarians must be considered.

Compared with numerous traditional journals that have been published for decades, new OA journals require time to become widely known. A key to the success of OA journals is that authors are willing to publish in OA journals. To promote the OA movement, numerous academic librarians have attempted to persuade faculty to support OA publications and become OA authors. Traditionally, librarians are regarded as research supporters, assisting researchers in accessing the research resources that they require (Monroe-Gulick, O'Brien, & White, 2013). However, growing OA journals provide librarians with an opportunity to create knowledge. This can improve the extent to which librarians are involved in scholarly communication and increase their positions in the higher education system. Therefore, we investigated whether librarians tend to become authors of OA journals because of their OA practice. Although librarians advocate OA publishing and support the concepts of OA (Palmer, Dill, & Christie, 2009), little is known about librarians' involvement in digital scholarly communication, that is, their research published in OA journals (Mercer, 2011).

Previous studies on the relationship between OA publishing and libraries have focused on librarians' implementation of OA practice, their attitudes toward OA, and the role that librarians play (Allard, Mack, & Feltner-Reichert, 2005; Hansson & Johannesson, 2013; Mullen, 2010; Palmer et al., 2009; Taylor & Francis Group, 2013). Regarding the research output of librarians, numerous studies have analyzed traditional LIS journals to investigate the characteristics of publications by librarians, the authorship of LIS articles, and authors who collaborated with librarians (Apolinario, Eclevia, Eclevia, Lagrama, & Sagun, 2014; Norelli & Harper, 2013; Ocholla, Ocholla, & Onyanha, 2012; Ogbomq, 2010; Weller, Hurd, & Wiberley, 1999; Wiberley, Hurd, & Weller, 2006; Winston & Williams, 2003; Zemon & Bahr, 1998). Studies have asserted that librarians were the most numerous among various types of author, and faculty members did not frequently collaborate with librarians (Buttlar, 1991; Norelli & Harper, 2013; Watson, 1985; Winston & Williams, 2003). Because of a lack of studies on librarians' OA research activity, this study focused on librarians' research contributions in OA journals on LIS. We focused on authors' occupations and librarians' collaborators and determined the changes in authors' occupations and types of collaboration during the study period (2008–2013). The results elucidate librarians' contribution to OA publications from the perspective of authorship. The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. Which type of author was the most prevalent in OA articles on LIS?
2. Which type of author collaborated with librarians the most frequently?
3. Is the number of articles by librarians in OA journals increasing?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The contribution of librarians to scientific knowledge has been investigated. Numerous studies have measured the percentage of

articles authored by librarians and the percentage of librarian authors among articles in LIS journals, revealing the extent to which librarians are involved in creating LIS knowledge. Several researchers have analyzed the characteristics of articles authored by academic librarians (Bahr & Zemon, 2000; Budd & Seavey, 1990; Krause & Sieburth, 1985; Weller et al., 1999; Wiberley et al., 2006; Xia, Wilhoite, & Myers, 2011; Zemon & Bahr, 1998). Other researchers have analyzed the characteristics of all LIS articles and classified authors by occupation to identify which type of author was the most prevalent (Norelli & Harper, 2013; Olsgaard & Olsgaard, 1980; Watson, 1985; Winston & Williams, 2003). Various classification schemes for author type have been developed.

Norelli and Harper (2013) divided authors into three broad categories: faculty, librarian, and other. They confirmed that university librarians published more articles than college librarians did. Chapman and Pike (1993) developed a classification scheme comprising five groups of authors: librarians, LIS faculty, LIS students, other faculty, and other. Other researchers have considered that librarians' job responsibilities are affected by the type of library with which they are affiliated. They have divided librarian authors according to the type of library and produced a classification scheme comprising numerous categories. Olsgaard and Olsgaard (1980) classified authors of LIS journal articles into seven categories, including academic librarians, public librarians, other librarians, LIS faculty, other faculty, and other. Winston and Williams (2003) devised a classification scheme comprising seven categories, namely academic librarians, academic library administrators, public librarians, LIS faculty, other faculty, doctoral students, and other. According to the first author, academic librarians accounted for the largest group, followed by LIS faculty and academic library administrators. Watson (1985) divided authors into 11 groups, 7 of which are related to librarians. The remaining groups comprise LIS faculty and students, other faculty, the corporate sector, and other. In addition, LIS faculty was further divided into four groups according to academic rank. Among 11 groups of authors, academic librarians were the most prevalent. Buttlar (1991) developed a more detailed classification list comprising 22 categories differentiated according to occupation. Most categories are related to the category librarian, and they are separated according to job responsibility and position. For example, they include reference librarians, library deans, and children's librarians. Because Buttlar (1991) divided librarians into numerous groups, LIS faculty accounted for the largest percentage, followed by reference librarians in university libraries. Librarians were the most prevalent authors. This is consistent with studies by Olsgaard and Olsgaard (1980), Watson (1985), and Winston and Williams (2003).

Watson-Boone (2000) defined librarians who conduct research and participate in creating professional LIS knowledge as practitioner–researchers. The research purposes of a practitioner–researcher were determined to be studying their practice, obtaining information for policy making, and satisfying individual curiosity (Jarvis, 1999). Librarians' research topics are typically practice oriented, whereas LIS faculty's research topics are typically theory oriented. A librarian–faculty divide in LIS research has been identified in traditional publications. The librarian–faculty divide also has been explored based on LIS OA articles. Xia et al. (2011) identified that the citation rate of OA articles by librarians differ from that by faculty members.

Librarians and faculty advance LIS knowledge. The advantages of combining theory and practice have been recognized and are encouraged in various fields, suggesting an increasing trend in research collaboration. Although single-authored articles were the most prevalent in LIS literature, numerous studies have investigated multiauthored articles (Apolinario et al., 2014; Buttlar, 1991; Chapman & Pike, 1993; Weller et al., 1999; Wiberley et al., 2006). When researchers observed a growing trend in the number of coauthored articles in LIS (Terry, 1996), they began to shift the research focus from the number of authors per article to collaboration, including collaboration between librarians and faculty, researchers who frequently collaborated with

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