

SCHOLARLY PRODUCTIVITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, 1960-1970 : IMPLICATIONS FOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This work looks at scholarly productivity at the University of Ghana from 1960 to 1970. The study has brought out an issue of low productivity during the period. Low funds, the poor publishing industry in Ghana, lack of equipment with which to do research, among others have been noted as problems affecting scholarly publishing at the University of Ghana. Some suggestions have been made for the improvement of scholarly output at the University of Ghana.

INTRODUCTION

This work is a follow up to an earlier one by Alemna¹ and published in the *International Journal of Information and Library Research*. A comparison of scholarly productivity for the two different periods would be made in another paper.

Research is very essential to academic work in the universities and it forms one of the major functions of the academic staff of any university. This position has been emphasized by Ifidon² who states that the primary traditional functions of universities are teaching, research, public services and the conservation of knowledge and ideas. Kwapong³ also notes that research is

very essential to a university and is one of the three main functions of the university, the other two functions being teaching and public service. Looked at in another way, a university's role is to create knowledge, preserve knowledge, disseminate knowledge and serve its public, and it can perform these roles with the appropriate information from its library services.

Research findings invariably are made known by having them published. Thus the stature or status of the academic staff is measured by the number of publications to his name.

At the University of Ghana, the most important requirement for promotion is publications. Without the requisite number of publications, an academic staff who is retained in the University of Ghana for other obvious reasons, can retire without any promotion. The rule is either you publish or you perish, and some lecturers' appointments have been terminated for lack of publications.

The University of Ghana requires publications in refereed journals or highly regarded journals. For this reason, most academics try to publish in well regarded journals and with notable or well-reputed publishers. However, failure to get their research published

by these well-known or highly regarded publishers, some academic staff tend to look to less renowned publishers or less acclaimed journals⁴.

The issue of publications is very important in the life of an academic staff at the University of Ghana who wants to make it to the top. The unfortunate situation is that the publishing houses in the country have not made publishing very easy for researchers and academic staff who want to publish. The well known publishing houses like Ghana Publishing Corporation, Assemblies Press, Sedco Publishing and Woeli Publishers among others have been heavily handicapped by financial constraints and other necessary logistics, and low salaries have made the few qualified staff to drift to other areas. The Ghana Universities Press and the School of Communication Studies Press which are expected to publish academic or scholarly materials in the University of Ghana are unable to carry out their functions due to lack of funds, equipment, inputs and expertise. This has forced academic staff at the University of Ghana to send their manuscripts to publishers and journal houses in Europe, America, Australia and also to some Asian countries. This handicap is, however, a blessing in disguise because it has given them access to wider markets and a wider readership.

Bottle⁵ and others accept that the productivity of an academic can be calculated by counting the number of publications produced over a period of time. Supporting the above view Ehikamenor⁶ also states that the pro-

ductivity of a scientist can be measured by the average number of journal articles published every year since he turned a professional scientist. Hattie⁷ and others also point out that the individual faculty member's scholarly productivity can be counted and used as a unit of analysis when evaluating higher education. Counting can thus be used to measure the status of an academic with regard to scholarly publishing.

The main aim of this work is to count the research productivity of academic staff of the University of Ghana, Legon, as a way of estimating their contribution to Ghana's development effort through research.

The study covers academic publications within the decade 1960-1970. The source of data is from *A bibliography of University of Ghana staff publications, 1948-1973*, compiled by S.N. Amanquah.

Such a study is bound to come up with some limitations. The compiler, S.N. Amanquah indicated in his introduction that not all the academic staff responded to the request to send lists of their publications. There were other omissions in his work which covered lists that were submitted by academic staff which were limited or incomplete in bibliographical citations. These were not listed by the compiler because they would not be useful to anybody. Items whose existence could not be verified were also excluded by the compiler. All the above created a shortfall in the bibliography.

PROMOTION OF RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

Research has been mentioned as one of the main functions of a university and in view of this, the University of Ghana has put in place certain measures to promote it. Alemna⁸ has mentioned the Research and Conferences Committee and the Publications Board as some of the structures which promote research.

University departments also dispose of small funds for departmental and individual research, according to Sawyer⁹. But this is very small and most of the time non-existent.

Apart from the University of Ghana putting in place structures to aid publishing, the government of Ghana has also tried to encourage publishing. This has been done by instituting a research allowance of ₵600,000.00 (six hundred thousand cedis) per annum which is equivalent to \$120, for academic staff. Also a book allowance of \$550 (five hundred and fifty dollars) per annum has been added to the package for the purchase of books. Both allowances have been considered to be woefully inadequate by the academic staff for the promotion of research and they have asked for their upwards adjustment.

The situation has not been helped any better by the paucity of academic journals and the poor quality of their printing. The poor journal situation has worsened the woes of very serious academic staff who want to publish locally.

The research process needs an inter-

rupted flow of adequate funds and flourishing academic journals to be very effective. This has been the concern of academics in the University of Ghana.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

For the period under study, 1960 to 1970, a total of 2150 publications were recorded at the University of Ghana. This has been analysed by departments, faculties, corporate authorship, co-authorship, journals, books, gender, geographic distribution of publishers and intensity of publications.

By 1970 the University of Ghana had forty-five departments and the productivity by departments has been provided in Table 1.

The highest published departments with over a hundred publications within the period under review are three departments - the Department of Zoology emerging as the highest with a hundred and thirty nine publications. This department is followed by Economics with a hundred and eleven and then Botany with a hundred and two. An interesting point to note is that no department from the Medical School falls within the ten highest published departments though medicine is assumed to be an area in Ghana that one can easily research into because of the fertile nature of the area and also the numerous hospital cases that abound.

The number of productivity by Faculty, School and Institute is shown in Table 2.

It is relevant to indicate here that the

DEPARTMENTAL PRODUCTIVITY
TABLE 1 : Total Number of Publications by
Departments, 1960-1970

DEPARTMENT	NO. OF PUBLICATIONS
Zoology	139
Economics	111
Botany	102
Crop Science	92
Animal Science	75
Sociology	75
Geography	74
Archaeology	72
History	69
Agricultural Economics and Farm Management	65
Medicine and Therapeutics	63
Physics	61
Religious Studies	61
Chemistry	55
Surgery	50
Linguistics	44
Nutrition and Food Science	44
Political Science	43
Geology	32
Modern Languages	22
Philosophy	22
English	21
Community Health	20
Mathematics	17
Microbiology	17
Agricultural Research Station - Nungua	16
Library and Archival Studies	16
Physiology	15
Chemical Pathology	14
Registry	13
Agricultural Research Station - Kade	12
Classics	12
Pathology	12
Pharmacology	11
Agricultural Research Station - Kpong	10
Balme Library	10
Home Science	8
Obstetrics and Gynecology	8
Psychiatry	6
Anaesthetics	5
Biochemistry	5
Anatomy	2
Child Health Psychology	2
Post-Basic Nursing	1

Balme Library, that is the University of Ghana Library and the Registry or Central Administration have been placed under one category as 'others'.

Corporate authorship from some departments, institutes and schools amounted to 19 (2.5%), and Personal authorship came to 743 (97.5%). No corporate author issued more than one publication.

Looking at the total number of publications, it could be safely stated that few works were issued through corporate authorship.

CO-AUTHORSHIP

The analysis further shows that publications by individual authors number 1793 (83.40%) and as already indicated publications by corporate authors are just 19 (0.88%) and co-authored works come to 338, being 15.72% of all the publications issued.

BOOKS, PUBLISHED LECTURES AND CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS, CHAPTERS IN BOOKS AND JOURNAL ARTICLES

For the period under study, 1960-1970, 231 (10.74%) of the publications from the University of Ghana were books, 45 (2.09%) were published lectures, 61 (2.84%) were published seminars, conference proceedings and chapters in books, and 1813 (84.33%) were journal articles. Thus journal articles were far more than the other categories of publications.

GENDER PRODUCTIVITY

The results further show in Table 3 that out of 743 researchers who published within the period 1960-1970, 716 (96.4%) were men. The women who

PRODUCTIVITY BY FACULTY/SCHOOLS /INSTITUTES.**TABLE 2: Publications by Faculty, Schools, Institutes.**

NAME	NO. OF PUBLICATIONS	%
Faculty of Social Studies	463	21.5
Faculty of Science	455	21.2
Faculty of Agriculture	278	12.9
Medical School	225	10.4
Institute of African Studies	218	10.1
Faculty of arts	182	8.5
Faculty of Law	124	5.8
Institute of Statistics, Social and Economic Research (ISSER)	66	3.1
Institute of Adult Education	41	1.9
School of Administration	41	1.9
Institute of Education	34	1.6
Others	23	1.1
Total	2,150	100.0

published within this period comprised a mere 27 (3.6%).

This shows a wide disparity in gender productivity during the years under study. This is so because the Ghanaian society encouraged more males than females to go to school. It was the belief in the thirties, forties, fifties and sixties that no matter how educated a Ghanaian woman would be her husband would always make her end up as a housewife, so there was no point in educating the Ghanaian female. However, this situation started changing in the seventies and it was given a big boost in recent years by the Beijing Conference on women in 1995. The female child is being encouraged to go

to school.

TABLE 3: Gender Productivity

GENDER	NO.	%
Men	716	96.4
Women	27	3.6
Total	743	100.0

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

The publications issued were found in various journals all over the world as depicted in Table 4. Out of a total of 497 journals, 160 (32.2%) came from Africa; 289 (58.1%) from Europe; 38 (7.7%) from North America; 5 (1.0%) from Asia and another 5 (1.0%) from Australia. Journals from Europe outnumber all the other journals put together. This shows that researchers have

preference for journals from Europe. It is quite interesting to note that academics from the University of Ghana do not publish much in African journals. This is because African Journals have problems such as access and frequency of publication.

Table 4: Geographical Distribution of Publications

NAME	NO.	%
Europe	289	58.1
Africa	160	32.2
North America	38	7.7
Asia	5	1.0
Australia	5	1.0
Total	497	100.0

INTENSITY OF PUBLICATIONS

The analysis of data portrays a variety of intensities of research among the various groups of researchers whose productivity rates have been analysed. Quite a significant number published just once as portrayed in Table 5. Out of a total of 743 researchers, 351 (47.24%) published once, 106 (14.27%) published two times, 56 (7.54%) published three times, 50 (6.73%) published four times and the remaining 190 (24.22%) published above four times but at varying levels of intensity.

TABLE 5: Intensity of Publications

NO OF PUBLICATIONS	NO. OF RESEARCHERS	%
1	351	47.24
2	106	14.27
3	56	7.54
4	50	6.73
Above 4	180	24.22
-	743	100.00

DISCUSSION

Some factors have contributed to the low level of scholarly productivity at the University of Ghana during the period 1960-1970. One of the reasons for this low output was the fact that Ghanaian academics were needed to serve their society in various capacities. After independence in 1957 and becoming a republic in 1960, it was felt that there should be indigenization of the entire country in all aspects - political, economic, social and cultural. Thus educated Ghanaians, in view of their specialised expertise, were

needed to serve their communities in leadership positions while still lecturing at the University of Ghana. Some served in political positions, while others served on boards, corporations, committees and commissions or as managers of government establishments and agencies. The vision to create a new Ghana required the academics to work with dedication. Combining all these duties with lecturing and publishing was not an easy task. The academics could therefore not have adequate time to do research so as to publish their findings.

Another problem was the poor state of the publishing industry in Ghana. The well-developed publishing industries that one could easily find all over Europe and America were not found here in Ghana. It was thus very difficult getting works published in Ghana. A lecturer recounted his experience of sending his manuscript to a publisher. After 12 years of waiting, he was sent the manuscript to have it revised for publishing. Dolphyne¹⁰ also states that some journals have kept some articles for over 20 years before having them published.

A serious issue to consider at the time was the work load on some lecturers. Some departments could not get their full complement of staff and were seriously understaffed requiring a few lecturers to handle bigger loads than required. It was very difficult to research and publish under those conditions.

In the area of some of the sciences, some major problems hindering research were that of laboratories, chemi-

cals and equipment. Lack of well-established laboratories, chemicals and equipment made it very difficult for some lecturers to conduct research and have their findings published.

The publication disparities among some departments within the same faculty could be traced to the importance attached to some of the subjects by the Ghanaian society and the ability of these departments to receive funding for projects. Some science and agricultural subjects received international funding because it was thought that these subjects were the engines that made societies develop hence the name developmental subjects. This partly accounted for the high productivity rates of the Departments of Zoology, Botany, Crop Science and Animal Science. For the Department of Economics which had a high productivity rate during the period under review, it is common knowledge that economics is very vital to the existence of a country, thus such a department would readily receive funds for all manner of research projects than other departments.

Another factor responsible for the low productivity rates in some departments could be traced to the unequal distribution of academic staff. Some examples at the time were the Departments of Biochemistry, Psychology and Post-Basic Nursing. When the research productivity of these departments are compared to other departments like Economics, Sociology and Geography, one can notice the wide disparities.

The data analysis portrays a high rate of individual publications as against

co-authored works. This could be due to lack of funds for team work to be done. However, it is often said that joint publications most often bring out the best in people because of cross fertilization of ideas. Nevertheless, quite a good number of publications were co-authored in the sciences as it makes it easier to work in a team than individually and also external funding for team work in the sciences is easier.

During the decade 1960-1970, out of a total of 2150 publications, 231 were books. This is a small number. Book publishing more often than not poses more problems than journal articles. This is because books most often are bigger requiring more funds before they can be published and the editorial work is more involving. The lack of funds to give a fillip to publishing accounts for the small number of published books.

IMPLICATIONS FOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

It has been stated in the early part of this work that the main functions of a university are teaching, research, public service, and the conservation of knowledge and ideas. Thus university libraries have to provide their parent institutions with the requisite materials to perform the above functions. Further to this, the university library has to provide general materials that can broaden the horizon of both academic staff and students to be able to develop society or their communities. The university library must be able to provide materials that meet the specialised information needs of the

university community as well as the broader society.

The university library assists its parent institution in the creation, preservation and dissemination of knowledge, and should also be able to use materials generated by academic staff as exchange so that other universities could benefit from its contribution to knowledge.

To a large extent, a university library should reflect the teaching and research programmes of the academic staff and these demands should determine and shape the activities of the university library.

For a university library to be able to perform its functions, depends on its rate of growth which is also dependent on the quality and quantity of research generated by its own academic staff as well as its ability to purchase needed materials. A university library stocked with foreign materials alone or a very large preponderance of foreign materials does not reflect a healthy development of that library. The quality and quantity of locally generated research is very crucial to the balanced growth of the University Library.

Lecturers provide reading lists to their students and these lists should contain their personal contributions to the field of knowledge. Thus the university library should contain books and periodical articles that have been written by members of the University. The library's collections to some extent should show the extent of research done and the directions taken by the

research work of the academic staff. The university library should thus reflect, in a way, the repository of the collective wisdom of the academic staff. The university library should demonstrate that its parent institution is contributing to the advancement of learning, teaching, research and the conservation of knowledge.

One implication of the findings of this work is that the research output during the period 1960-1970 being low did not contribute much to the growth or development of the University of Ghana Library. This is because the low rate of the publications would not add significantly to the stock and thus would not be able to satisfy much the information needs of all the clients of the University Library. Another implication is that the University of Ghana would not be able to satisfy adequately through its own research publications the information demands from other universities particularly through exchange of publications or interlibrary lending and document delivery. This has been borne out at the University of Ghana by the numerous unsatisfied demands for exchange of publications from several foreign universities.

A disquieting implication is the serious imbalance in the research output of the various departments. A university library cannot develop well if part of it lagged behind due to inadequate research in some subject areas. The whole university library needs to develop together otherwise the pace of development will be slow. This is the situation one finds in the University of Ghana Library. Some departments like Zoology, Economics and Botany have

large research outputs and others like Child Health, Psychology and Post-Basic Nursing have very little research papers within the period under study.

On the whole, the low research output has contributed in no small way to hinder the development of the University of Ghana Library and other library systems in the University. A serious implication of this is that significant strides are not being made in Ghana's development effort because research generated is not adequate to help the engines of development.

A university's academic standing is gauged internationally by the size and quality of its research productivity. This low output would affect adversely its international standing and this would rub off on its library too. The University Library would not be held in very high esteem.

CONCLUSION

The study has brought out the fact that scholarly productivity at the University of Ghana has been low during the period under study. Low funding has been the major problem hindering active research. Other problems which accounted for the low scholarly productivity have been the poor publishing industry, lack of chemicals, well-established laboratories and equipment with which to do research in some of the sciences, and absence of journals in which to publish. The low productivity rate adversely affected the growth and development of the University of Ghana Library in the area of local collections.

As a way forward to help improve the situation, government should try to increase funds to the University of Ghana so that more research can be done. The publishing industry should be improved by central government. Chemicals, well-established laboratories and equipment in the University of Ghana should be provided by the Ministry of education, Higher Education Division for more scientific research to be done.

The University of Ghana should look for and attract funded research projects for its academic staff since this is the normal procedure in some universities in Europe and America. The University should also team up with some of the numerous research institutes in the country to do joint research.

University journals should be developed to enable academic staff publish in local journals which can be easily accessible to other Ghanaians who may need such information. Meanwhile, while waiting for the publishing industry to improve, academic staff should be encouraged to do research and send their manuscripts to publishing houses in Europe and North America for publishing.

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