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ISSN: 0361-526X (Print) 1541-1095 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/wser20

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To cite this article: Christian Mubofu & Henry Mambo (2022) Academic Writing and Publication Support Services: The Role of Librarians in Higher Learning Institutions, The Serials Librarian, 83:3-4, 261-276, DOI: [10.1080/0361526X.2023.2227660](https://doi.org/10.1080/0361526X.2023.2227660)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0361526X.2023.2227660>



Published online: 11 Aug 2023.



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Academic Writing and Publication Support Services: The Role of Librarians in Higher Learning Institutions

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ABSTRACT

Despite the presence of well-equipped libraries and committed librarians in higher learning institutions, the rate at which academicians produce and publish their work has slowed significantly in recent years. This is concerning since publication is important in decisions about promotion and contracts in academic and specialized settings. The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of librarians in the publishing process within academic institutions, the level of awareness among academicians regarding the research support services provided by librarians, the factors impeding academicians from actively engaging in writing and publishing, academicians' perceptions of the services offered in academic libraries, and, finally, academicians' recommended services that could improve their publication rate.

KEYWORDS

Academic writing;
publishing; academicians;
librarians; predatory journals

Introduction

Academic library staff makes significant and diverse contributions to the operations of universities in both developed and developing countries. This study was undertaken exclusively in the Tanzanian context to investigate the role of librarians in academic writing and publication support services.

Academic library staff assist faculty and students at the reference desk, lead research sessions in the library, and create library collections. Librarians have the advantage of dealing with information resources in a variety of formats on a regular basis. They have been taught and practice the tactics and tricks for selecting and retrieving the best information resources for use from diverse databases.¹ Librarians' abilities and knowledge enable them to be good writers and information disseminators of research findings to the appropriate audience for speedy decision-making.

Librarians as information resource evaluators are able to distinguish fake information from real information and they can easily distinguish predatory from reputable journals. Predatory journals in the context of this study refer to the journals that actively solicit new submissions through strong email marketing and high acceptance rates.² However, as a result of their lack of thorough peer review, the submitted articles' scientific validity is called into question. Likewise, improper article processing fee systems and a lack of suitable review mechanisms raise suspicious aspects. Furthermore, Teixeira da Silva (2022) demonstrated that librarians, as scholarly correspondents, play an important role in transmitting precise information concerning "predatory" publication to students, faculty, donors, university administration, and the general public.³ Predatory journals and their websites are designed to replicate reputable and high-quality publications, and some open access journals have been hijacked and cloned in order to fool users into thinking they are reading the original journal.⁴ Publishing in predatory journals can jeopardize a researcher's career, and information seekers are misled by information that is erroneous or of poor scientific quality. The knowledge which most of the academicians from other professions lack and have been struggling in the whole process of academic

writing. Academicians refer to the teaching staff in universities and other higher learning institutions who are highly engaged with the teaching, research, and consultancy services. Although they have been doing well in teaching it has been realized that research and consultancy services have been neglected by most of the academicians. Academicians as part of the academic community are surrounded by books, technology, and librarians who provide the support not only on writing for the profession but also produce poetry, novels, short stories, and creative nonfiction for children and adults.⁵

It was further noted that academic librarians are essential in supporting the academic community to find solutions with regard to the publication process.⁶ Moreover, librarians have aided academic originators to issue open access journals and books, and they have operated with lecturers to produce open educational resources by confirming the quality of digital contents, its reuse, and distribution. Empathizing the importance of librarians in the academic environment, it was argued that academic libraries are supposed to upkeep university students, teaching, and research staff by providing access to scholarly information.⁷ Thus, to demonstrate their value and significance to their parent institutions they should be somewhere in the middle between researchers, authors, publishers, content providers, students, and teachers.

The study by Yalçın and Yalçın⁸ exposed the difficulties academicians face in academic research processes in universities. The study outcomes revealed that during the research process academicians are confronted by challenges like foreign language problems, difficulties in the data analysis process, problems in publishing their researches, time problems in their researches, problems in collaborative works with their colleagues and difficulties in reaching international resources. From the study findings by Yalçın and Yalçın,⁹ it can be established that academicians who are forced to publish in order not to perish do not make use of their libraries and thus they have not benefited much from the services provided by the academic libraries.

Most of the problems reported to be difficulties faced by the academicians in the research writing process can be addressed by the librarians in academic libraries. This indicates that library users, especially academicians, are not fully benefiting from the existence of academic libraries especially on the issue of publishing process. It is unclear whether the role of librarians and academic libraries is known to users or not. Librarians in academic libraries are in a good position to assist academicians in the academic writing and publication process if they are effectively motivated by the university's management. It is the intention of this study to reveal the reasons as to why publishing in academia has been difficult despite the availability of well-trained academic librarians who are dedicated in providing services for academics, teaching, research, and consultancy services to the university community.

Theoretical framework

The study adopted Bandura's social learning theory. The theory states that there is an environment in which human learning takes place in the child's life because it is in this environment where the child will be able to interact with teachers, librarians, and library information resources in the library settings. It is through librarians that learners including academic staff in higher learning institutions can effectively make use of the library information resources. The library provides various learning opportunities for large and small groups as well as to individuals whose interests are in the intellectual content and information literacy learning.¹⁰ Library provides a unique space for its users like students, lecturers, and researchers to do independent work related to teaching, research, and consultancy.

This theory has implications in this study for the role of librarians and libraries in the learning abilities of learners because for learners to learn they need support from librarians and reading information resources that have to be provided to them in the library settings. The theory is relevant in this study because for academic staff in universities and higher learning institutions to be effective in the publication process they need information resources, and to get it, they have to search for it in various spaces like databases, gateways, and other internet-based information platforms. However, to

get the right information in the quickest time possible assistance from the professional librarians becomes inevitable.

Review of related literature

Writing and publishing is one of the most significant things academicians can do. Publication deliberates seriously in decisions about promotion, and contract in academic and other specialized settings. Scholars have written much on the support that library staff provides to teaching staff and other researchers. Some studies have been reviewed in this study:

Secker et al.'s study, "Copyright Literacy and the Role of Librarians as Educators and Advocates", published in 2019, found that librarians and library groups must take the initiative to promote copyright and support other writers with respect to the fair use of information resources.¹¹ The copyright knowledge possessed by librarians need to be imparted to academicians in higher learning institutions since among their roles is to research, write articles, and publish them to public consumption. This implies that having knowledge on copyright issues helps them to use another author's work fairly and this reduces the rejection rate of the manuscripts submitted in various reputable journals for publication.

Academicians have been facing a challenge of falling into the hands of predatory journals where they are forced to pay the publication fees and eventually their manuscripts are being published without being properly reviewed.¹² jointly conducted a study on predatory publishing in Zambia. The study revealed that predatory publishing is posing an increasing threat to academic credibility and to individual academic reputation. The study concluded that sensitizing scholars about the nature of predatory publishing, librarians can support researchers to practice safe publishing. Librarians are in many ways exceptionally positioned to take on this role, as they understand how digital content is acquired and how access is granted through license agreements.¹³ Because librarians are associated with the Research stage of the lifecycle, which is largely characterized by data access and discovery, the study by Tulley and Balduff¹⁴ further established that librarians play a crucial role in the circular flowchart depicting the academic publishing process, which is divided into six stages: Research, Write, Review, Publish, Distribute, and Read. Librarians have been promoting data access for decades by removing paywalls or other barriers to information readers need for their research, and they have also helped with data discovery by advising subject-specific resources or improving search tools that help researchers find, choose, and use pertinent information.¹⁵

The study conducted by Mwantimwa and Wema¹⁶ noted that awareness of online journal publishing systems among academic staff at the University of Dar es Salaam does not match with frequency of using the systems. This implies that librarians still have a significant role to play in ensuring that academicians in higher learning institutions are aware of the techniques and strategies in the manuscript publication chain. Additionally, Bilawar¹⁷ conducted a study on lockdown period and information sources. The study revealed that librarians played a great part during the lockdown period by educating researchers on research topics through webinars, online conferences and via zoom meeting. Some of the topics taught by librarians during the lockdown include: ethics in academic writing; research and publishing ethics; ethical and quality aspects of research in present era; research ethics in e-environment; quality of research and publication ethics; effective research writing and ethics in publications with new tools and techniques.¹⁸ The topics taught helped authors to continue writing and publishing in very difficult situations.¹⁹

Jointly noted that librarians need to engage academic communities in a shift toward open access models. This suggests that authors have established the significance of academic librarians' work as is directly linked to the scholarly publication process. The study further stresses that librarians in academic libraries have a role in supporting and advocating for open access and open educational resources through participation in campus affordable learning initiatives, working with disciplinary faculty in new ways to draw attention to open access resources.

Unfortunately, little is known about the role of librarians in higher learning institutions in developing countries such as Tanzania in terms of academic writing and publication support services provided by librarians to academic staff. Despite the attention that academic writing and publication have received, very few studies have been conducted to demonstrate the contributions made by librarians, particularly those who work in academic libraries and are considered academicians due to the role they play in institutions of higher learning.²⁰ To address the noted gap, it is necessary to go deeper into the issue by assessing the roles of librarians in higher education institutions in connection to academic research writing and publication support services.

Statement of the problem

Libraries are service-oriented entities established for the provision of appropriate information resources and excellence services to encounter customers' information needs. Academic Libraries in particular are established to support the university community in academics, research, teaching, and consultancy services. The goal of establishing academic libraries is defeated if clients are not happy with the services they provide. This study is set to examine the role of librarians in motivating academicians to write and publish in higher learning institutions. Doing research and publishing findings in reputable journals increases the visibility of scholars and institutions at large. Researching, writing, and publishing research findings gives more rewards like providing a unique and important type of self-education. However, observations show that currently very few academic staff in higher learning institutions in developing countries, especially the early- and middle-career researchers conduct research and publish the findings. Even though academic staff may recognize a necessity for extra support, research indicates that they are afraid or embarrassed to seek support from professional librarians.²¹

Study objectives

- (i) To find out the contribution of librarians in publishing process in academic institutions
- (ii) To determine the awareness of academicians on the kind of research support services provided by librarians in academic institutions
- (iii) To establish factors hindering academicians from being proactive in writing and publishing in academic institutions
- (iv) To assess the perception of academicians on the services provided in academic libraries

Methodology

The study involved two higher learning institutions, i.e. The Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy (MNMA) and Open University of Tanzania (OUT). The two higher learning institutions being in the city have attracted many academicians to work with or plan to transfer the employment to work with them. The establishment of MNMA started in 1958 while that of OUT in 1992. Their long-term survival in the education industry was the reason for the selection of two higher learning institutions for inclusion in this study. The fact that they have been in existence for several years one may conclude that their libraries have been supportive to academicians in the whole process of publishing and academic writing.

A closed-ended structured questionnaire was designed to collect the data. A link of Google form containing well-constructed questions was shared in two WhatsApp groups of academicians working in the two higher learning institutions under study. Academicians from the two higher learning institutions participated in the survey. A total of sixty-nine (69) academicians responded to the survey. When researchers started collecting comparable data from study participants, data gathering was stopped. This is because the study employed the saturation principle during the data collection process. It is typically understood to mean that additional data gathering and/or analysis is not

Table 1. Background information of the respondents.

	Responses	
	Frequency	Percent
Distribution of Respondents by Institution		
MNMA	42	60.9
OUT	27	39.1
Distribution of Respondents by Gender		
Female	42	60.9
Male	27	39.1
Education of Level Respondents		
Masters	37	53.6
Bachelor	17	24.6
PhD	15	21.7
Frequency of Library Usage		
Weekly	25	36.2
Once per month	18	26.1
Every day	17	24.6
None of the above	9	13.0
Articles Published in Last Two Years		
Five	2	2.9
Four	1	1.4
Three	5	7.2
Two	10	14.5
One	9	13.0
None	42	60.9

necessary given the data that have already been gathered or examined.²² In addition, Hennink, Kaiser, and Marconi²³ noted that that saturation in research is a standard for stopping data collecting and/or analysis. Data received in the Google form was transported into excel for cleaning and coding purposes. The cleaned and coded data finally were transported into the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) Version 20 computer program for further descriptive analysis. The investigators performed a descriptive analysis whereby simple frequencies and percentages were the end results of the analysis. Results from the analysis were presented in tables and figures.

Results and discussions

Background information of the respondents

In the present study, several background information of the respondents were requested. The results from the analysis are presented in Table 1.

Distribution of respondents by institution

In this study, academic staff working in two higher Learning institutions were involved. After the analysis of data, it was revealed that 42 (60.9%) participants were from the Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy while 27 (39.1%) were from Open University of Tanzania. Although the two higher learning institutions under study operate under the umbrella of two different authorities, the National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NACTVET) and the Tanzania Commissions Universities (TCU), respectively, their academic staff are required to conduct teaching, research and community-based consultancy services. The research and consultancy services conducted in higher learning institutions are geared towards addressing various societal problems. The reports from the research and consultancy services need to be condensed, repacked, and disseminated in a way that even the lay persons can understand and apply them in their daily lives.²⁴

Distribution of respondents by gender

In terms of gender, 42 (60.9%) identified as female, while 27 (39.1%) identified as male (Table 1). This is consistent with the findings of Justine,²⁵ who discovered a high proportion of females in their study of the diverse roles of academic librarians. According to Justine²⁶ the higher percentage of females to males tends to mirror the library profession as a whole, and so may be interpreted as being relatively representative of the discipline of academic librarianship.

Education level

The researchers requested the study participants to state their education levels. The study results after the analysis of data were presented in frequencies and percentages. Results from the analysis show that the 37 (53.6%) participants had Master's degrees, 17 (24.6%) had bachelor's degrees while 15 (21.7%) had PhD.

Frequency of library usage by respondents

The study participants were asked about their frequency usage of the academic library. The results revealed that 25 (36.2%) said they use the academic library weekly, 18 (26.1%) said once per month and the other 17 (24.6%) said every day while 9 (13%) said they never used the academic library on weekly basis, every day or once per month. Findings indicate that the majority 36.2% use the academic library weekly. This is an indication that the study participants were using the library for various purposes. However, more joint efforts are needed to ensure that the number of academicians who use the academic libraries in the study area is increased from the current 24.6%.

Research articles published by academics in the last two

The investigators further asked the academics the number of articles they have published in the last two years. The researchers wanted to know how active the academicians are in the two academic institutions under study. The results of the present study revealed that 2 (2.9%) have published five research articles in the last two years, 1 (1.4%) said four articles, 5 (7.2%) have published three articles and 10 (14.5%) have published two articles in the last two years. Furthermore, it was revealed that 9 (13%) have published one research article in the last two years while the majority 42 (60.9%) have not been able to publish any research article in the last two years. The majority 60.9% of the academicians in the two academic institutions have not published research articles in the last two years. This is an indication that there are serious problems that need to be addressed to assist this group of academicians so that they can start or boost their publication speed.

Contribution of librarians in the publishing process

They sought a study to identify the contribution of librarians in supporting the academic staff in the publication process, and the study participants were requested to rate the statements on the five likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree as in indicated in Table 2.

Table 2. Contributions of a library in the publication process (n = 69).

Variables	Responses				
	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
Training on e-resources or databases	11.6	26.1	17.4	33.3	11.6
Libraries provide us with document delivery services	10.1	23.4	30.4	18.8	17.4
Libraries provides us with a conducive study area	5.8	14.5	15.9	43.5	20.3
Librarians provides us with e-catalogue services	5.8	14.5	18.8	44.9	15.9
Online Services are provided by librarians for academics purposes	5.8	13.0	24.6	40.6	15.9
Provide list of journals where we can submit manuscripts	8.7	18.8	27.5	37.7	7.2
Library directs us to the library books and journals	5.8	15.9	17.4	42.0	18.8

Key: SD = Strongly Disagree D = Disagree N = Neutral A = Agree SA = Strongly Agree.

Training on e-resources or databases

Findings show that the majority 23(33.3%) respondents agreed that one of the contributions of libraries in the publication process is the workshops conducted by librarians on the access of electronic resources and retrieval of information from the open sources and subscribed databases by the libraries. The study result concurs with those by Krier, Premo, and Wegmann,²⁷ who established that librarians in academic libraries have a role in supporting and advocating for open access and open educational resources. This implies that training provided by library staff to academicians contributes a lot in changing them to become active researchers and good academic writers.

Libraries provide us with document delivery services

The study findings also revealed that 21 (30.4%) respondents when asked on whether libraries provide them with document delivery services were neutral. This shows that this service is not provided or if it is provided not all the academic staff were aware of such service. It is the role of library staff to ensure that all library services provided are marketed to library users. This will guarantee that the library users are aware of the services they offer in the libraries and in this way its contribution will be vivid to users. In this age of the COVID-19 pandemic, document delivery services played a great role in informing the library users on various information resources available in academic libraries and then delivery of these resources is done electronically.²⁸

Libraries provide us with a conducive study area

Furthermore, 43.5% of the respondents agreed that a library contributes to the provision of a conducive study area for them to concentrate on academic works. This is probably because most of the offices used by the academicians in the Institutions under study are normally shared by more than three of them. This makes the offices not conducive when they want to concentrate with the writing. The study by Umami et al.²⁹ established that libraries provide furniture that is important in the creation of a comfort zone for the readers to effectively use the library and its information resources.

Librarians provide us with e-catalogue services

Another important contribution libraries could make to academicians is by having competent librarians who could provide users with electronic catalogue services that are important in assisting the library users on what is found in the library. The electronic libraries that could be provided to users include an online public access catalogue. In this study 44.9% of the participants noted that libraries contribute to their publishing process by availing them with electronic catalogues that are important in identification of important information resources for their teaching and other academic works,

Online services provided by librarians

The study results shows that 40.6% of them agreed that libraries contribute to them by providing them with online services like assisting them step by step in accessing the e-books, e-journals, and other subject-based information gateways. In recent years, the workload associated with managing the growing collection of electronic resources has surpassed the workload associated with managing print assets. This collection transition required librarians to learn how to acquire, categorize, and give access to new online information resources, as well as assume additional responsibilities and gain new skills important in addressing the user's information needs.³⁰ This implies that academicians appreciate this service and librarians need to do more to ensure that all the academicians are conscious of this important service.

Provide a list of journals where we can submit manuscripts

Librarians are normally knowledgeable with various reputable journals that other researchers from their institutions could submit their manuscripts for publication considerations. The tricks and techniques for knowing the reputable journals are well known to most of the librarians. In this

study, 37.7% of the study participants agreed that libraries do a lot through librarians by availing to them the list of reputable journals where they could submit their manuscripts for publication.³¹ In this world where there is an explosion of online publishing to fall into the hands of predatory journals where even the copyright issues are not respected is very easy especially to young researchers.³² Therefore, informing the academicians on where to publish the articles is a great job contribution library has been making to their academics. This is due to the fact that academic librarians are aware of the presence of predatory journals and are also aware of the drawbacks of publishing in predatory journals.³³

Library directs us to the library books and journals

Forty-two percent of the study participants agreed that the library has the guides that direct them to the library books and journals available in their respective libraries and therefore, saving their time. This has also been insisted by Ranganathan, the father of librarianship in his five laws.

Awareness of research support services given by librarians to academicians

The investigators wanted to know if the study participants were knowledgeable about the research support services provided by librarians to academic staff in an attempt to assist them in the academic writing and publication process. The study results in [Table 3](#) show that 41 (59.4%) participants were knowledgeable of the research services provided by the librarians in support of research services, while 28 (40.6%) reported that they were not knowledgeable on the research support services provided by librarians.

The study results show that the majority 59.4% knows that they can get help from librarians in case need arises. It is, however, important for the librarians to make efforts to ensure that every academic staff in the institutions under study know the vital role they play in supporting the academic staff in the publication process. The study findings are in line with the study findings by Mwantimwa and Wema³⁴ conducted at the University of Dar es Salaam, which revealed that librarians still have a significant role to play in ensuring that academicians in higher learning institutions are aware of the techniques and strategies in the manuscript publication chain.

Familiarity of research writing tools by academicians

Among the significant roles librarians play is to train library users including academicians in higher learning institutions on the use of various tools that support the learners to become effective writers. The study participants were asked about their familiarity with the usage of four important tools. The study results revealed that 51 (73.9%) participants knew how to use Google Scholar to search for relevant information for their academic works, 20 (28.9%) said they are familiar with the use of Mendeley reference management software while 15 (21.7%) said they are familiar with the use of Google Docs which helps them to edit and collaborate with other researchers easily by working on the same document at the same time. Further, it was revealed that 9 (13%) study participants were familiar with the use of Zotero reference management software and only 5 (7.2%) were knowledgeable and familiar with the use of Endnote, as shown in [Figure 1](#).

It is clear from the study findings that the majorities 73.9% of the academic staff are familiar with Google Scholar and to a large extent use it in the manuscript preparations for publication of academic

Table 3. Awareness of research support given by librarians to academicians (n = 69).

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No	28	40.6
	Yes	41	59.4
	Total	69	100.0

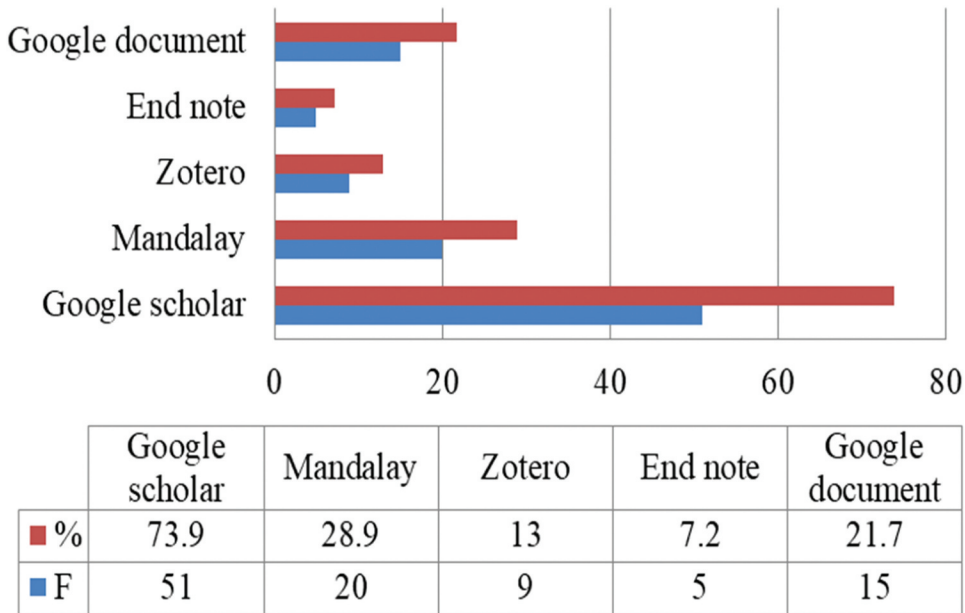


Figure 1. Familiarity of research writing tools by academicians (n = 69). Note: F = Frequency % = Percent

papers. This shows that academic staffs are not aware of the weakness of Google Scholar that is why they have been consistently using it in the writing process. According to Jacsó,³⁵ there are massive content omissions currently however, with upcoming changes in its structure; Google Scholar will become an outstanding free tool for scholarly information discovery and retrieval.

With regard to familiarity with the reference management tools, the majority 28.9% exposed that they were familiar with Mendeley. This is probably because of its ease of use, availability to library users, and popularity. Knowledge, use, and familiarity with the citation and reference management tools are very important as they help researchers to collect and organize references in their research papers. Additionally, reference management tools have been widely used by researchers to store, organize, and manage their references for research papers, theses, dissertations, journal articles, and other publications.³⁶ This implies that although Zotero and Endnote were the least cited by the study participants it is important for the librarians to train them so that they can have a wide variety of choices.

The study shows that Google Docs was another tool academicians are familiar with and have been using them in academic writing. Due to its importance in writing every academician needs to have some skills on how to use it. According to Noviska et al.,³⁷ Google Docs is a free web-based application used by researchers and other authors for creating, editing, collaborating, and sharing the document with one another. Librarians being knowledgeable in the Google Docs, it is their role to impart that knowledge to others including academicians who lack such important knowledge.

Factors hindering academicians from academic publishing

The study participants were asked to state the factors hindering them from being active in the publication process. Findings are shown in Table 4.

Lack of time

The study findings revealed that 65.2% of the study respondents revealed that lack of time was the reason hindering them from composing research manuscripts and publishing. This is in line with

Table 4. Reasons hinder academicians from publishing frequently (n = 69).

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Lack of time	45	65.2
Lack of motivation from employers	41	59.4
Lack of research writing soft skills	33	47.8
Lack of collaborations with senior researchers	33	47.8
Distractions	32	46.4
Deficiencies in training	31	44.9
High rejection rate of my previous manuscripts	23	33.3
Tedious reviewing exercise	21	30.4
Writing anxiety	19	27.5
Writing is inherently difficult	16	23.2
Writing as pathological	7	10.1

the study findings by Holmes et al.,³⁸ who reported that the three main reasons for the infrequent publishing were lack of time to devote to writing activities, lack of confidence in writing ability and lack of skills in utilizing scholarly resources. The study by Itua et al.³⁹ examined the barriers and solutions to academic writing: Perspectives from students, higher education, and further education tutors. The study revealed that lack of time and confidence; lack of extended writing; lack of reading and understanding of academic texts or journals; referencing; and academic jargon were reasons for infrequent writing and publishing among junior researchers, students, and academicians in higher learning institutions.

Lack of motivation from employers

In this study, 59.4% of the study participants noted that lack of motivation from employers is a reason as to why they do not engage very much in the research writing and publication. This implies that employer's motivation is imperative for the employees to fully engage in the research writing and publication process. This is in line with Blankenstein et al.,⁴⁰ who argued that motivation to write is an important factor in writing competence and those who lack motivation to write will not readily engage in academic writing activities.

Lack of research writing soft skills

Another reason pointed out by the study participant that hinders the academicians from being effective in publishing was the lack of research writing soft skills reported by 47.8% of the study participants. In addition, Sumarwati, Amiruddin, and Madar⁴¹ noted that, to be competent in research writing and publishing one need to possess research skills that will help them to identify and explore the matter in more depth in answer to the questions that arise when the study is conducted. The research skills highly needed by the researcher include inference skills, research design skills, moral and ethical research skills and integrity skills. Although these skills are not new to academic librarians, Tulley and Balduff's⁴² study found that some academics assume the librarian has a single function and is not especially adaptive, or that the librarian would not understand the research being gathered.

Lack of collaborations with senior researchers

Results from this study show that the lack of collaborations between the junior and senior researchers was also a reason as to why they have infrequently been writing and publishing as reported by 47.8% of the interviewed study participants. Senior researchers are more experienced and are well knowledgeable on how to deal with various writing challenges like addressing reviewers' comments which to a junior researcher may be a great challenge. Nuhoglu and Aydinoglu⁴³ noted that junior researchers play a key role in evolving research by providing dissimilar and original points of view which are important to be researched in collaborations with senior researchers. Collaboration among researchers in research and

dissemination of research findings has become imperative due to the fact that knowledge has become a treasured resource for exchange and thus plays a key role in scientific production, education, and research careers.⁴⁴

Distractions

The study revealed that was the reason for infrequent publishing by academicians in the two institutions under study reported by 46.4% of the study participants. According to Black,⁴⁵ distractions include those caused by social media and emails which can interrupt your writing space. This implies that they need to be advised that if they have deadlines, and they need to keep working on a piece of writing until they finish, they should consider breaking their work session up into short and focused sessions.

Deficiencies in training

In the present study, it was discovered 44.9% of the respondents noted that writing deficiencies was a problem that hindered them from frequent publishing. Just like other professionals, training researchers plays a great role to ensure that they produce high-quality research papers for disseminating findings appropriate to address societal challenges. Deficiencies in academic writing training have a grave impact on young researchers, and interventions are needed to ensure that young researchers and academicians in higher learning institutions are well equipped with the necessary skills.⁴⁶

High rejection rate of previous manuscripts

The present study revealed that 33.3% of the respondents revealed that high rejection rate was the reason for the infrequent publication rate. The findings imply that the study participants need to be trained on how to write the articles that could not be easily rejected by the journal or an editor. The rejection of a manuscript is normally caused by several factors such as failure to meet the submission requirements, incomplete coverage of literature, the manuscript submitted being out of scope.⁴⁷ Additionally, Skrabalak⁴⁸ established that the rejection rate of manuscripts is the result of submitting inappropriate scope and insufficient novelty. It is therefore significant for the librarians to inform the academicians on what the reviewers want in order to reduce the high rejection rate of the submitted manuscripts.

Tedious reviewing exercise

30.4% of the study respondents revealed that tedious reviewing exercise was the reason that hindered them from being active in manuscript writing and pushing research findings. The academicians and young researchers are normally bored by the review process due to the fact that they are less knowledgeable on the importance of it.⁴⁹ Peer review acts as the filter by ensuring that only good research is published, which means reviewers establish the validity, significance, and originality of the work. It is therefore the role of learned librarians to train the junior researchers, academicians, and postgraduate students to become familiar with good writing strategies. It is important for the academicians and other researchers to organize or participate in internal and external research seminars while still being in the research process. Academicians need to be taught on how they can respond to reviewer's comments effectively and learn how to approach the peer review comments confidently.

Writing anxiety

The study results show that 27.5% of the study participants showed that writing anxiety was one of the reasons hindering academicians in higher learning institutions from frequently writing and publishing research articles. This is in line with the study by Holmes et al.,⁵⁰ who established that early researcher development is nervous with anxieties and questions about capability. Reasons or causes of writing anxiety according to Holmes⁵¹ include: lack of time to devote to writing activities; lack of skills in utilizing scholarly resources and lack of confidence in writing ability.

Writing is inherently difficult

The study shows that 23.2% reported that writing is inherently difficult. This implies that stakeholders like librarians and senior researchers should assist in mentoring junior researchers including academicians so that they can start to practice writing manuscripts and submitting them in various journals for publication considerations. However, the study by Aldabbus and Almansouri⁵² established that writing difficulty is attributed by several issues like poor choice of appropriate academic words, difficulty in developing research statement, lack of writing practice opportunities and lack of skills in writing coherent paragraphs.

Writing as pathological

The study results show that 10.1% of the study participants indicated that writing as pathological was a reason for them to publish infrequently. This implies that the exercise of academic writing has a predisposition to be regarded as a pathological condition with certain behavior, like writing for prolonged periods of time which are regarded as to be harmful. However, prescriptive tactics give enough credit to academic writers who are more experienced at finding a writing context that suits them than this warning analytical method.

Perception on the library services provided in academic libraries

Researchers investigated the academicians' perception on the library services provided in academic libraries. This question aimed to see whether academics in the academic institutions under study they know, value and have been using the academic libraries in their institutions. Findings from the analysis were presented in Table 5.

Recommended services in library to enhance publication speed

Study participants were asked to recommend the services that could be added to their academic libraries that could enhance their publication speed. The following services were suggested:

- Academic libraries should organize several training sessions focusing on equipping academic staff with relevant skills on manuscript writing and publication process. Workshops about publishing on reputable journals, training on how to use tools like Zotero, Mendeley, endnote in citation and references, training on use of subscribed electronic databases, training on how we can use services for publications
- Establishment of a research support corner within the library. This corner needs to be operated by a knowledgeable librarian who can help academicians with various research information

Table 5. Perception on the library services provided in academic libraries (n = 69).

Variables	Responses				
	Agree %	Disagree %	Neutral %	Strongly Agree%	Strongly Disagree %
Library Information Resources cannot support my research	8.7	29	7.2	4.3	50.7
I source for information directly from the Internet and so no longer need the library support in the publication issues	13	29	18.8	7.2	31.9
Now that I use e-resources, I don't need to visit the physical library for research assistance	14.5	33.3	11.6	4.3	36.2
Research is essential to my job, to write and publish quickly I always seek assistance from librarians	27.5	13	10.1	37.7	11.6
Librarians always update us with the latest information for our research	29	23.2	23.2	10.1	14.5
Librarians are good resource persons when writing research for publication purposes	29	24.6	18.8	20.3	7.2

% = Percent

needs. The librarian working at this corner should be able to support and update the academicians with the list of journals where they can submit their manuscripts for review and publication process

- Study participants suggested that academic libraries should have a strong internet (both local area network (LAN) and Wireless (WiFi)) that could easily facilitate them to retrieve the electronic resources for addressing their information needs for academics, research, and consultancy services.
- Respondents also established that there is a need for extending the time to return the borrowed books. Observation from the two academic libraries under study shows that library staff both teaching and administrative staff are allowed to borrow library information resources for seven days which is not enough for academicians to read and extract important issues relevant to their research.
- It was also noted that computer facilities available in the two libraries were not enough to accommodate a large number of library users. Some of the academic staff depend on library computer facilities for information access and retrieval. Thus, they suggested that academic libraries should procure more library computers and that academic staff should have a separate computer room to avoid destructions from other users like students
- Study participants also recommended academic libraries having reliable electricity by ensuring that they have a standby generator. This will ensure that libraries information services are always reliable and sustainable.
- Other recommended services include establishment of institutional repositories, introduction of book delivery services, provision of passwords and usernames for electronic resources, also more books both on print and electronic resources need to be purchased especially on those books which their demand is high and their supply is low.
- Finally, the study participants recommended that academic libraries should be divided into several sections for undergraduate, postgraduate to avoid destructions

Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusions

Academic writing and publication support services are critical functions that academic librarians should do in any higher learning institution. Librarians' support of teaching staff in higher learning institutions is critical; nevertheless, teaching staff understanding of the support they might receive from librarians has to be increased.

The results of the study allow us to draw the conclusion that academic libraries play an important role in the publication process by offering training on the use of electronic resources, document delivery services, conducive study spaces, electronic catalogue services, online services by librarians for academic purposes, and a list of journals to which manuscripts can be submitted for review and publication. In contrast to the findings of Mwantimwa and Wema's study, the survey concludes that most academicians were aware of the types of research help services supplied by their libraries and librarians.

The study concludes by stating that the following factors prevent academicians from being proactive in writing and publishing in academic institutions: lack of time, lack of motivation from employers, lack of research writing soft skills, lack of collaborations with senior researchers, distractions, deficiencies in training, high rejection rates of previous manuscripts, tedious reviewing exercise, writing anxiety, writing is inherently difficult, and writing is seen as pathological.

The current study comes to the conclusion that the study participants, who overwhelmingly believed that research is crucial to their jobs, always sought the assistance of librarians in order to write and publish rapidly. Finally, the study suggests that in order to improve study participants' writing abilities, additional infrastructure, like dependable internet and computers, should be introduced to the library computer rooms.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are made in an effort to improve the academic writing and publishing support services in higher learning institutions with specific reference to the role of academic libraries and librarians in higher learning institutions in Tanzania: (1) librarians should conduct various training to equip the academicians with necessary writing and publishing skills (2) academic libraries should market their services so that all the academicians in the higher learning institution could be aware of their services (3) academic libraries in collaboration with the institutional management and other stakeholders should address the factors hindering academicians from being effective in writing and pushing research findings for addressing various societal needs.

Limitation of the study

The study used only MNMA and OUT academicians who were on the WhatsApp platform. The results, therefore, cannot be generalized to the entire MNMA and OUT academicians.

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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