

**PUBLISHING, COPYRIGHT AND ETHICAL PRACTICES AS  
INFLUENCING FACTORS ON THE RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY OF  
ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS IN A CHANGING SOCIETY; A CASE STUDY OF  
TWO UNIVERSITIES IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA.**

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**Abstract**

*The article investigated publishing, copyright and ethical practices as influencing factors on the research productivity of academic librarians in a changing society. A changing society can aptly be described as the pandemic ravaged epoch; the information revolution age; the age of digital revolution and age that unveils new things in succession. The connecting nexus among publishing, copyright, ethical practices and research productivity of academic librarians was identified. Federal University of Technology, Minna and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai were selected for the study. Total enumeration was used to capture all the academic librarians in the two universities. Twenty-seven (27) and Sixteen (16) academic librarians from Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai respectively. Two (2) research questions were asked and answered which included: 1. To what extent do copyright influence the research productivity of academic librarians in the selected universities? 2. To what level do ethical practices influence the research productivity of academic librarians in the selected universities? The research design used for the*

*study is descriptive survey of correlational nature. Findings from the study showed that copyright coupled with ethical use of copyrighted works influenced the research productivity of academic librarians.*

*It was concluded that adequate enforcement and practice of copyright vis-à-vis ethical use of published work influenced the research productivity of academic librarians to a very high degree. Based on the findings from the study, it was recommended that: copyrighted works should be fully protected; ethical practices must be imbibed while using copyrighted published work so as to boost the morale of academic librarians with hope of willingness to publish more in the future.*

**Keywords:** Research Productivity; Publishing; copyright; Ethical Practices; Changing Society;

### **Introduction**

One of the major yardsticks which are used to measure the growth, development and the profitability of the members of faculty including academic librarians across the globe is research productivity. Research productivity put succinctly can be quantitatively described as: the number of articles published in journals; number of papers presented in conferences and published in conference proceedings; number of articles in the form of chapters in edited books; and number of books published. Research productivity (output) which is quantitatively assessed is normally used to determine the career progression, advancement, promotion and appointment of academic staff including librarians in higher institutions of learning globally. More importantly, in the ranking of higher institutions as: best, above average, average or below average, the research productivity of academic staff which are usually displayed at the institution's repository is one of the indicators that are used (Babalola; Saidu; Abubakar; Uno; Tsado; & Tauheed, 2020), (Babalola; Uno; Saidu; Tsado; Salubiyi; & Abubakar, 2020).

Moreover, since the "publish or perish" syndrome is a common decimal in most institutions of higher learning in Nigeria, academic librarians by the nature of their appointment would not want to leave any stone unturned in ensuring that they publish enough papers that would count positively for them in terms of career progression. Publishing equally comes with a kind of inner joy, satisfaction and motivation that one's labour is being seen and viewed by others. Under normal circumstances, any academic librarian would be willing to publish more especially as his promotion to higher level is partly tied to it. However, if there are copyright violators who can infringe on the sweat of others in the form of piracy, unlawful reproduction of materials and outright theft of those materials, the original owners of copyrighted works would be discouraged and might be unwilling to embark on further production. In a similar vein if the published works are not ethically utilised, it could as well serve as disincentive to further production by holders of copyrighted works. Cases of litigation are rife in some places where infringers of copyrighted works would not only abuse the works but would as well corrupt the contents of the works thereby putting the

original owners of the works into problem of litigation. In other words, the academic librarians would be willing to increase the tempo of their productivity in the form of research if the other intervening variables of copyright protection and practical ethical practices are put in place fully.

The academic librarians of Federal University of Technology Minna, and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Lapai, Niger State were selected for the study. By nature of their appointment they are academic staff who are expected to publish for their career progression to be guaranteed. The two universities in Niger State were as well selected since they are the highest level of intellectualism and any results that would be obtained in the two institutions is believed to be superb.

Finally, it has not been established that a research that combines all these variables: publishing, ethical practices and research productivity of academic librarians have been carried out in the two institutions. Hence, the justification for the study. More importantly, we are in a changing society that has been described variously as: the information age, age of change, age of information revolution, digital age, and electronic age. The meaning is that in this age, publishing can be carried out in any format, through any media and passed across to others in remote distance. One aspect of the changing age is that conferences and other meetings could be held online without physical interaction. An individual in Nigeria can present a paper in Kenya remotely using digital technology. All correspondences could be sent, stored, accessed and utilised electronically. The experience of the pandemic (Covid-19) has added another dimension to it; members of the faculty could stay in their comfort zones and publish. During the lockdown occasioned by Covid-19 which cut across the globe, many people participated in online conferences through zoom, certificates of paper presented were received. Conference proceedings were equally received. Since we are in a changing cum digital society; the future is still uncertain, it is therefore important to think ahead and brainstorm on how academic librarians and the entire members of faculty could boost their research productivity in the face of any physical encumbrances like Covi-19 lockdown. In other words, the tempo of research productivity could increase even without physical presence and participation of members of faculty in a changing society.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Academic staff including academic librarians in institutions of higher learning are expected to be highly productive in terms of research productivity. Research productivity is one of the physical indicators that are normally used to adjudge academic staff as either productive or less productive. Academic librarians under normal conditions would be willing to be highly productive. However, it has been observed by the researchers that the productivity of some academic librarians is a bit low (Babalola, 2014). What could have been responsible for this scenario of low productivity? It might be due to lack of motivation since most of the copyrighted works are still vulnerable to copyright abuse and infringements of all forms. It could also be as a result of discouragement that copyrighted works are not only abused but are at

times corrupted through unethical usage which would give rise to cases of litigation against the real owners of copyrighted materials. It is against this backdrop that the researchers investigated publishing, copyright and ethical practices as factors that could influence the research productivity of academic librarians in a changing society, a study of two universities in Niger State, Nigeria.

### Research Questions

Two research questions guided this study. They are:

1. To what extent do copyright influence the research productivity of academic librarians in the two universities in Niger State?
2. To what level do ethical practices influence the research productivity of academic librarians in Niger State?

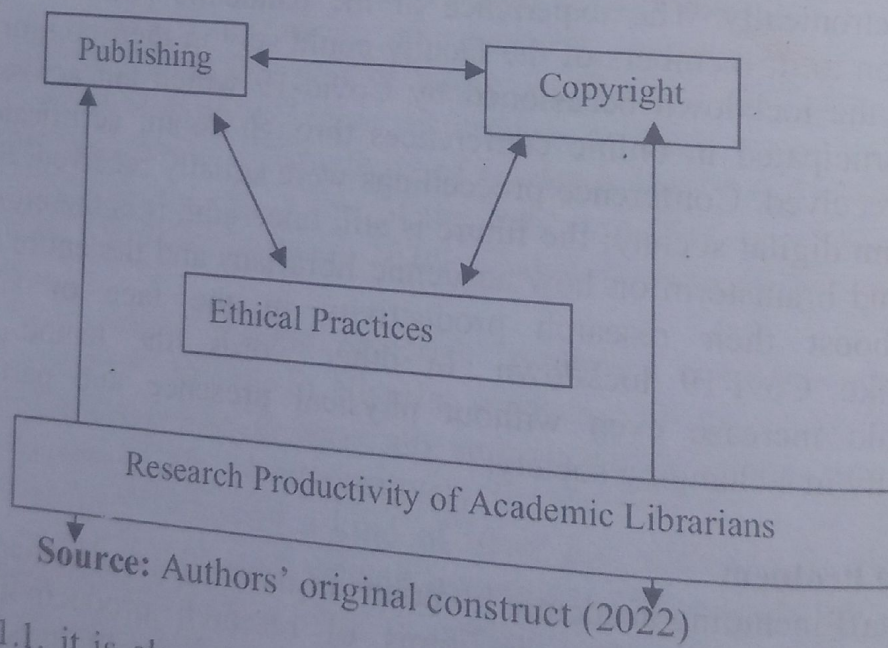
### Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant composite influence of publishing, copyright and ethical practices on the research productivity of academic librarians in the two universities in Niger State.

### Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.1



From figure 1.1, it is clear that there is a natural flow among the variables that are diagrammatically presented. The arrows that are pointing in different directions showed the nexus, the interrelatedness, interconnectivity among: copyright, ethical practices and the research productivity of academic librarians in the selected universities in Niger State, Nigeria.

It is presumed from the framework that under normal circumstances, where good ethical practices are imbibed and adhered coupled with strict and proper enforcement of copyright law on copyrighted works, the researches especially academic librarians

would be encouraged to publish more thereby increasing the tempo of their researchers productivity quantitatively in terms of number of journal articles published, number of papers presented at conferences in the form of proceedings, number of articles in edited books, number of books published. The published article(s) by the publisher (academic librarians) could be ethically protected by the copyright law, hence increases the research productivity.

### **Publishing**

Publishing is the activity of making information, literature, music, software, and other content available to the public either for sale or for free (Cambridge English Dictionary, 2020). Traditionally, the term publishing refers to the creation and distribution of printed works, such as books, newspapers, and magazines. However, with the advent of digital information systems, the scope has expanded to include digital publishing such as ebooks, digital magazines, websites, social media, music, and video game publishing. Furthermore, Openpr (2023) opined that Publishing is also known generally as means of duplicating a written content and making it widely available and accessible through already existing distribution channels.

### **Copyright**

A copyright is an intellectual property law that gives author(s) or writer(s) the exclusive right to copy, distribute, adapt, display, and perform a creative work, usually for a limited time (Wipo, 2018). Similarly, Copyright.gov (2023) defined copyright as a type of intellectual property that protects original works of authorship as soon as an author fixes the work in a tangible form of expression. Copyright is intended to protect the original expression of an idea in the form of a creative work, but not the idea itself

### **Research productivity**

Research productivity of the members of the faculty would receive a boost when favourable conditions which include: good working environment, working tools, funding and other forms of motivation are provided. (Babalola, 2014). Uwizeye, et al (2021) reviewed factors that are associated with research productivity in higher institutions in Africa and results showed that both institutional and individual factors are associated with the level of research productivity in higher education institutions in Africa. Institutional factors include: the availability of research funding, level of institutional networking, and the degree of research collaborations, while individual factors include: personal motivation, academic qualifications, and research self-efficacy. Specifically, factors such as enhanced faculty research networks and collaborations, and research supporting policies offered protected research time to faculty members and created a conducive research environment that motivated researchers to increase research productivity.

According to Hollister (2016), in a survey of the research productivity of post-tenure librarians, the respondents were asked to share their perceptions of research production pre and post-tenure, majority of respondents reported having produced or intending to produce research post-tenure. Walters (2016) investigated the influence of four institutional variables (university-wide research activity, eligibility for sabbaticals, university control, and enrolment) on the scholarly productivity of librarians at research universities in the United States. He found that librarians' research productivity was influenced by university-wide research activity and faculty status. Baro and Ebhomeya (2012) investigated the research productivity of librarians in Nigeria. They found that there was no significant difference in research output between librarians and lecturing faculty. Despite obstacles of long hours and heavy workloads, they encouraged librarians to embrace publication as a responsibility for promotion.

There is still increasing interest in the research productivity of librarians, the factors which increase productivity for librarians have not yet been fully explored. Within other academic disciplines, research examining factors that contributed to research productivity are more common (Brew, Boud, Namgung, Lucas, & Crawford, 2016). Research productivity studies have used a variety of methods (e.g. bibliometrics, citation analysis) across a wide range of contexts (e.g., different institutions or disciplines). The research environment of librarians is often suggested to be specific from that of other academic disciplines, requiring unique supports and conducive atmosphere, due to the different nature of academic librarian work.

In their study, Igri et.al. (2021) identified major challenges hindering research productivity of academics in Nigeria research and tertiary institutions such as non-funding of research, lack of mentorship, brain drain challenge, lack of training, lack of motivation, and non-payment of hazard and publication allowances. Resource, institutional and cultural constraints have a considerable influence on research productivity of academic staff in the university (Okendo, 2018). Environmental factors such as: institutional missions and visions, leadership, rewards, availability of resources, and individual-institutional dichotomy could affect research productivity (Quimbo and Salabu, 2014). Other factors that could have powerful effects on research performance of academics are: government investment, national policies, politics, academic freedom, development partners, and support from industries and international donor agencies (Negash et al., 2019; Sam and Dahles, 2017; Tien, 2016).

Research productivity can be an important element of librarians' career development and career progression; however, librarians' enthusiasm and capacity to achieve and maintain a scholarly record is inconsistent. While some librarians have excelled in this aspect of their responsibilities, others have struggled (Walters, 2016; O'Brien & Cronin, 2016). In a similar vein Okenedo (2015), affirmed that research productivity plays a major role in defining the success in academic circles as it is related to promotion and salary of academic staff. Academic research productivity has

been widely investigated and found that several factors, such as the quality of doctoral training (Lyyhnen, Baskewille, Livari and Te'eni, 2007), mentorship (Bentley, 2012) serve as predictors of research productivity. In a similar vein, Dahiru and Opeyemi (2020), findings revealed that innovative work behaviour significantly influenced research productivity of academic staff. Simisaye and Popoola (2019) also established that there is a relationship between information literacy skills and research productivity of the academic staff.

Saimroh (2017) examined the effect of research characteristics, subjective well-being and research competence on research productivity of Indonesian researcher agency for research and development training. The results concluded that there were significant differences in the research productivity based on academic qualification and the functional job researchers, the results also showed that subjective well-being and research competence had direct positive effect on the research productivity. Intrinsic motivation is imperative for research productivity on academic staff. Hire, Oonyu and Kyaligon (2020), thus recommend that management of universities should implore strategies for promoting intrinsic motivation in order to promote research productivity.

### **Research Methodology**

The research design used for the study is descriptive survey of correlational nature. Total enumeration (census) was used to select all forty-three (43) academic librarians (who are holders of at least first degree in librarianship) in Federal University of Technology, Minna and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai. The research questions that guided the study were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and the only null hypothesis was tested and analysed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) formula.

### **Data Presentation**

Table 1:1. Copies of questionnaire administered and copies returned

S/ N	Federal University of Technology, Minna		Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai	
1	No. administered	No. returned	No. administered	No. returned
	27	18	16	13

From Table 1.1 Twenty-seven (27) copies of questionnaire were administered in Federal University of Technology, Minna and eighteen (18) copies of the questionnaire were retrieved. In Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai sixteen (16) copies were administered and thirteen (13) copies were returned. A total of forty-three (43) copies of questionnaire were administered and thirty-one (31) copies were returned and found usable.

**Research Question 1:** To what extent do copyright influence the research productivity of academic librarians in the two universities in Niger State?

**Table 2: Influence of Copyright on Research Productivity of Academic Librarians**

Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	N	F X	$\bar{X}$	StD
My understanding of copyright has influenced my journal articles published	12(38.7)	9(29)	6(19.4)	4(13.0)	31	91	2.94	0.44
My understanding of copyright has influenced the number of books I published	11(35.5)	8(25.8)	6(19.4)	6(19.4)	31	86	2.77	0.27
My understanding of copyright has influenced the number of book chapter contributed	14(45.2)	8(25.8)	5(16.1)	4(13.0)	31	94	3.03	0.53
My understanding of copyright has influence the number of conference proceeding published	7(22.6)	13(42.0)	4(13.0)	7(22.6)	31	82	2.64	0.15
My understanding of copyright has influenced technical papers that I have published	5(16.1)	8(25.8)	11(35.4)	7(22.6)	31	73	2.36	0.15
My understanding of copyright has influenced the number of joint research work I have published	13(42.0)	8(25.8)	1(3.2)	9(29.0)	31	87	2.81	0.31
<b>Weighted Mean</b>							<b>2.75</b>	<b>0.25</b>

Table 2 revealed that five (5) items have a mean score higher than the criterion mean of 2.50 on a four point adopted likert scale. They are: item 1: My understanding of copyright has influenced my journal articles published ( $\bar{X}=2.94$ , StD=0.44) item 2: My understanding of copyright has influenced the number of books I published ( $\bar{X}=2.77$ , StD=0.27), item 3: My understanding of copyright has influenced the number of book chapter contributed ( $\bar{X}=3.03$ , StD=0.53), item 4: My understanding of copyright has influenced the number of conference proceeding published ( $\bar{X}=2.64$ , StD=0.15) and item 6: My understanding of copyright has influenced number of joint research work I have published ( $\bar{X}=2.81$ , StD=0.31). While one of the items have a mean score lower than the criterion mean of 2.50 on a four point likert scale. Item 5: My understanding of copyright has increased number of joint research work I have published ( $\bar{X}=2.36$ , StD=0.15).



**Research Question 2:** To what level do ethical practices influence the research productivity of academic librarians in Niger State?

**Table 3: Influence of Copyright Ethical Practice on Research Productivity of Academic Librarians**

Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	n	FX	$\bar{X}$	StD
Fair use practice has influenced my research productivity	8(25.8)	13(42.0)	7(22.6)	3(9.7)	31	88	2.84	0.34
Fair dealing practice for the purpose of research has influenced my research productivity	13(42.0)	8(25.8)	5(16.1)	5(16.1)	31	91	2.94	0.44
The awareness of copyright infringement sanctions has influenced my research productivity	5(16.1)	6(19.4)	9(29.0)	11(35.5)	31	67	2.16	0.34
My awareness of copyright law has improved my writing skills and also influenced my research productivity	13(42.0)	9(29.0)	4(12.9)	5(16.1)	31	92	2.97	0.47
The zeal to have my own copyright has influenced my research productivity	14(45.2)	8(25.8)	5(16.1)	4(12.9)	31	94	3.03	0.53
<b>Weighted Mean</b>							<b>2.79</b>	<b>0.29</b>

Table 3 revealed that four (4) items have a mean score higher than the criterion mean of 2.50 on a four point adopted likert scale. They are: item 1: Fair use practiced has influenced my research productivity ( $\bar{X}$  =2.84, StD=0.34) item 2: Fair dealing practice for the purpose of research has influenced my research productivity ( $\bar{X}$  =2.94, StD=0.44), item 4: My awareness of copyright law has improved my writing skills and also influenced my research productivity ( $\bar{X}$  =2.47, StD=0.47) and item 5: The zeal to have my own copyright has influenced my research productivity ( $\bar{X}$  =3.03, StD=0.53). While one of the items have a mean score lower than the criterion mean of 2.50 on a four point likert scale. Item 3: The awareness of copyright infringement sanctions influence my research productivity ( $\bar{X}$  =2.16, StD=0.34).

**Hypothesis**

One null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**Ho1:** There is no significant influence of copyright ethical practices on the research productivity of academic librarians in the two universities in Niger State.

**Table 4: Significant influence of copyright ethical practices on the research productivity of academic librarians in the two universities in Niger State**

Correlations						
Variable	N	df	Mean	SD	R	P
Copyright ethical practice	31		81.22	52.73		
		29			0.082**	0.05
Research productivity	31		96.13	61.67		

\*.\* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level.

Table 4 showed that the correlation coefficient = 0.082  $P > 0.05$  i.e. Critical value R 0.082 is greater than P 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant influence of copyright ethical practices on the research productivity of academic librarians in the two universities in Niger State is rejected. This by implication means that copyright ethical practices influence research productivity of academic librarians in the institutions studied.

### Discussion of Findings

From the data presented and the summary that are derivable from the findings the following discussion are plausible and logical. Findings from this study showed that copyright protection influenced the research productivity of academic librarians in the two universities to a very high extent. The findings of the study are in agreement with the findings of Onoyeyan1 and Awe (2018) who discovered that copyright law gives protection to creators of information resources and also provided for a balance between promoting the users' right as well as creators' right in boosting their research productivity.

Moreover, it is evident from this study that ethical use of information resources influenced the research productivity of academic librarians in the two universities used for the study. The findings is in consonance with the findings of Paruzel-Czachura, Baran and Spindel (2021) who stated that researchers are confident about ethical practice in research and predicted that it enhanced research productivity of academic researchers. The findings however, are at variance with the findings of Lessick et al., (2016) who observed that research helped to demonstrate the value of library services and contributed to their evaluation and improvement. Finally, findings from the study showed that there is a significant composite influence of publishing, copyright and ethical practices on research productivity of academic librarians in the two universities. The findings of the study conformed to the findings of Barrios, et.al (2017) and Wager and Kleinert (2012) who stated that, ethical practices and self-regulation in scientific publication allowed researchers to assume their obligations freely and with a greater

sense of responsibility. The findings however, did not agree with the findings of Teran (2011) and Targino (2011) who opined that pressure to publish a large number of articles in high impact journal are indicators for research productivity and quality.

### **Summary of Findings**

From the data presented in the study the following summary of findings are visible.

1. Copyright protection positively influenced the research productivity of academic librarians to a great extent
2. Ethical use of information resources influenced the research productivity of academic librarians to a great level.
3. There is a significant composite influence of publishing, copyright and ethical practices on the research productivity of academic librarians in the universities selected for the study.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

It is concluded from the study that copyright protection influences the research productivity of academic librarians to a great extent in the two universities and when information bearing materials are used ethically, the propensity to produce more copyrighted work increases among the academic staff including librarians.

The following recommendations are made from the findings of the study.

1. Copyright laws and regulations should be strictly adopted and enforced on all copyrighted materials especially academic publications.
2. It is mandatory for the regulatory body to emphasise, scrutinise and ensure that ethical use of information resources becomes the norm in all higher institutions of learning in Nigeria.
3. The university authorities should give academic librarians all forms of encouragement to publish in different available formats and media that are accessible in a digitally connected and changing age.

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