

Chapter 26

Taking a Photograph With Your Student: Framework, Challenges, and Opportunities of Publishing From Theses and Dissertations

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the author highlights why scholars publish, explores the nature and size of LIS theses and dissertations originating from South Africa, discusses their publication output, explores how to publish from dissertations/theses, and discusses the challenges and opportunities of engaging in such publications by using largely personal experience and desk research. The author concludes that successful publication from theses and dissertations calls for significant support for and mentorship of novice researchers by research supervisors, experienced peers, and established researchers, and this requires a great deal of collaboration and patience. He also argues that publishing research results, such as dissertations/theses in a credible scholarly journal or book, symbolizes quality research output.

INTRODUCTION

A large part of scholarly research output emanates from postgraduate theses and dissertations at the master's and doctoral levels. Unfortunately, such scholarly output, particularly in Africa, rarely gets disseminated beyond the walls of the higher education institutions (HEIs) of origin as institutional repositories (IR), where they can be deposited and accessed through open access (OA) are still quite limited as will be discussed later. From the experience of this author, most postgraduate students find it difficult to publish their dissertations because they lack knowledge on how to prepare their research output for publication in scholarly journals or outlets, and also because they fear possible criticism from peer reviewers. In this paper, I highlight why scholars publish, explore the nature and size of LIS

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theses and dissertations originating from South Africa, discuss their publication output, explore how to publish from dissertations/theses and discuss the challenges and opportunities of engaging in such publications by using largely personal experience and desk research. In the next section, I discuss what motivates scholars to publish.

WHY SCHOLARS PUBLISH

Several widely cited reasons explain why scholars publish their research output (Ocholla, 2007; Stilwell, 2006; Ocholla, 2011; Clowes & Shefer, 2013; Maher et al., 2014). Calvert and Gorman (2002, p. 3) observe that authors write

to disseminate new research findings or ideas. The publication of a paper establishes precedents in the formation of new knowledge, and puts new information in the professional domain where it can be scrutinized, criticized, and either accepted or rejected. It may then contribute to further discourse. The author also makes personal gains by adding to a list of publications that can be used for tenure and promotion, for gaining professional acceptance that may lead to speaking engagement, consultancy work, perhaps even awards.

Murray in Stilwell (2006, p. 7) summarizes the reasons as follows: career progression or moving up to the next rung on the ladder, gaining recognition for work done, preventing others from taking credit for one's work or using one's materials, helping one's students gain recognition for their work, learning higher standards of writing, contributing to knowledge, building the institution's status, and developing a profile. Other noteworthy reasons, in my view, include: to justify funding for an individual; department or institution; for tenure or permanent appointment; "publish or perish", or as a job requirement; career progression/promotion and other forms of reward, gratification, or boosting one's ego through recognition/visibility, knowledge sharing, announcement of propriety or ownership, community practice and incentive, and education and training. The next section focuses on research collaborative theories, which make up the co-authorship framework.

FRAMEWORKS AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

By frameworks, we refer to theories, models, policies and guidelines for partnership and collaboration. The concept, collaboration, has several meanings. Among other useful definitions, it may be viewed as a "partnership, alliance or network, aimed at a mutually beneficial clearly defined outcome" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2004, p. 1).

In a paper on research collaboration, Fari and Ocholla (2016) recognised Sullivan and Skelcher's (2002) three theoretical viewpoints on collaboration, namely: optimist, pessimist and realist. In the optimist viewpoint, the authors explain that the parties involved are regarded to be altruistic individuals with a long-term focus on benefits rather than immediate reward. Closely linked to the exchange theory, they add that the optimist viewpoint advocates the partnership of different parties involved in carrying out a project; aimed at solving a common problem through the implementation of shared responsibility, and a mutually oriented initiative for continuous long-term benefits. Thus, a collaborative initiative can

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