

Chapter 4

The Significance of and the Justification for Developing an Own Research Profile

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ABSTRACT

Any researcher needs to develop a sound research profile to boost his or her standing in the scholarly and research community. Developing a research profile starts with an idea that is brainstormed to develop a research focus. It also includes defining a research niche and stating the rationale and the aims and objectives of the research niche (University of Birmingham). It is to be hoped that emerging academics would, through this input, be in a better position to develop appealing, well thought out, well-organized and professional research profiles.

BACKGROUND

Working as a researcher can be a daunting career choice, particularly when one is just starting out. To establish a research identity is of paramount significance. One of the tools to establish it is an own research profile (Almomani, 2022). It not only takes time and considerable effort, but also requires the expertise of a mentor to develop a sound research profile (Griffiths, Thompson & Hrynie, 2010). A mentor must be a seasoned scholar and academic as well as a kind, supportive, and nurturing person. Some emerging scholars have been proactive in developing their research profiles by attending workshops and conferences to showcase their work.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-0806-7.ch004

In addition to that, they have been active on social media to ensure that their work is disseminated across the globe (Fauth, 2008).

The following issues are critical in developing an own research profile. First, a research profile should indicate a clear niche area and a research focus. Second, it should include a list of workshops and conferences that have been attended. Third, it should contain a list of publications. Finally, if a research profile is that of an established scholar, it should mention the number of people mentored. One way of becoming a mentor is to do an extensive literature survey to learn about best practices for mentoring emerging academics.

Countless scholars have been headhunted based on their sound research profiles (Bazeley, 2006) because they have increased their visibility through their scholarly work and have ORCID numbers and have published in OPEN ACCESS journals and scholarly books. A research profile is meant to be read by a wider audience (Almmani, 2022). Developing an own research profile should not be rushed since it requires time, effort, planning and management. Developing an own research profile is a must for every academic (Fauth, 2008). It is high time that institutions of Higher Learning make the development of an own research profile compulsory. Scholars' global visibility benefits not only themselves, but also the universities or institutions they work for. Their universities establish an international reputation as first-class institutions and attract post-graduate students and post-doctoral fellows. Such scholars are often invited as guest speakers to meetings and conferences (Aksnes, Langfeldt & Wouters, 2019).

So far, the positive aspects of developing an own research profile have been described. Some challenges of establishing an own research profile will now be highlighted. To develop a solid research profile can be a daunting task for the emerging researcher. On the one hand, budding researchers should demonstrate a willingness to grow and, on the other, there should be a goodness of fit between mentor and mentee. Some emerging academics are reluctant to seek help in developing their own-research profiles (Leta, Glanzel & Thijs, 2006). Their reluctance can be attributed to a fear of the unknown. They should realize that asking for help is, in fact, a sign of strength. But part of it is understandable since not all mentors have the requisite interpersonal skills and personality.

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