

Library-Led Scholarly Communication Training and Research Visibility at PAC University, Kenya

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Abstract

Academic libraries are increasingly expected to help researchers communicate, disseminate, and increase the visibility of scholarly work. Ideally, library-led scholarly communication training should equip researchers with skills in academic writing, referencing, publishing, copyright, open access, researcher profiling, and research impact. However, evidence on its contribution to research visibility in Kenyan private universities remains limited. This study determined the role of library-led scholarly communication training in facilitating research visibility at Pan African Christian University (PAC), Kenya. The study drew on Scholarly Communication Theory and Diffusion of Innovations Theory. A convergent mixed-methods design was employed. The target population comprised 200 participants, with a sample of 132 selected using stratified and purposive sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. Experts assessed validity, and pilot testing and Cronbach's alpha assessed reliability. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Findings showed positive perceptions of library-led scholarly communication training. Participants rated training availability highly ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.85$), and they rated its perceived contribution to publication visibility highest ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.84$). Participation ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.07$) and training frequency ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.12$) were comparatively lower. A strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship existed between scholarly communication training and research visibility ($r = .682$, $p < .001$, $n = 35$). The study concluded that library-led scholarly communication training contributes to research visibility, although limited participation and training frequency constrain its potential. The library and research management structures should institutionalize continuous, practical, researcher-centered training. The study demonstrates how library-led scholarly communication training can serve as a strategic mechanism for strengthening research visibility in Kenyan private universities.

Keywords: *Scholarly communication, academic libraries, research visibility, library-led training, scholarly publishing, research support, Kenya*

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1. Introduction

This study focused on two broad concepts: library-based scholarly communication training and research visibility. Library-based scholarly communication training refers to training provided by academic libraries to increase researchers' skills and knowledge in scholarly communication, publication, dissemination, and promotion of their research. In this study, library-based scholarly communication training was measured using factors like availability, involvement, frequency, relevance, and usefulness of the training, as well as skills acquired in areas such as academic writing, APA citation, referencing and reference management software use, journal selection, scholarly publication, open access, copyright issues, publishing ethics, researcher identifier, research metrics, and identifying predatory journals. Research visibility is the degree to which research output and researchers are discoverable, accessible, disseminated, and recognized inside and outside the institution.

Academic research visibility is important to a university's mission because it enhances communication, reputation, and global knowledge dissemination. Universities and libraries in countries such as the Netherlands and the United States have increasingly engaged in the support of research visibility through means such as open access publishing, institutional repositories, research data management, and scholarly communication services (Liu & Liu, 2023; Maddi et al., 2025; Woolcott & Shiri, 2023). Research visibility entails the ability to find, access, disseminate, use, and recognize scholarly work through means of digital platforms and scholarly communication systems (Orduña Malea & Font Julián, 2024). Its importance has increased with the evolution of digital scholarship, as the impact and reach of research depend on how visible scholarly outputs are. Libraries have become strategically positioned to facilitate the process of enhancing research visibility by helping researchers in areas such as scholarly publishing, open access, referencing, copyright, researcher profiles, persistent identifiers, and research metrics (Duffy, 2024; Woolcott & Shiri, 2023). For Pan African Christian University (PAC), it is important to understand the impact of the library-led scholarly communication support on research visibility.

Regionally, academic libraries in Nigeria, South Africa, and East Africa have offered scholarly communication training to enhance researchers' skills in disseminating and making their work visible. The training programs have covered topics such as scholarly publishing, open access, bibliometrics, research impact, and responsible publishing, among others (Kodua-Ntim, 2024; Leonard, 2025; Odigie et al., 2024; Subaveerapandiyana & Sinha, 2025). Nevertheless, challenges such as researcher engagement, lack of necessary technological skills, and institutional support limit the ability of scholarly communication training to make research visible (Nakitare et al., 2025; Oguiche et al., 2025).

The Kenyan context reflects these broader developments. Studies of university libraries have found that researchers receive support in areas such as identifying credible journals, accessing open-access publications, and locating research collaboration opportunities, although support for researcher profiling and social media-based dissemination remains less developed (Sawe et al., 2024). Other evidence from Kenyan universities shows that institutional repositories, peer-reviewed journals, open-access and academic conferences are important scholarly communication channels, but researchers continue to experience challenges related to publishing costs, limited assistance, and confidence in selecting appropriate channels (Mutegi et al., 2025). Despite this evidence at global, African, and Kenyan levels, limited empirical research has specifically examined the relationship between participation in library-led scholarly communication training and research visibility within individual institutions. PAC

University provides an appropriate setting for addressing this gap because its library offers training in academic writing, APA referencing, Zotero, journal selection, publishing, copyright, authors' rights, and researcher profiling. Examining this relationship can therefore provide evidence on whether participation in library-led scholarly communication training is associated with enhanced research visibility among researchers at PAC University.

1.1 Problem Statement

Despite the growing need for research visibility and the increasing role of academic libraries in facilitating scholarly communication, researchers still face numerous challenges in acquiring the competencies needed for successful publication and dissemination of their work. It is evident from the available evidence that a lack of awareness and training can be the reason behind improper utilization of scholarly communication (Oguche et al., 2025). At PAC University, the library offers scholarly communication training for researchers, but little empirical evidence shows how researchers' engagement in such training affects their research visibility. This raises an interesting research question about the effectiveness of library-based training in improving research visibility and helps examine the effect of scholarly communication training on research visibility at PAC University.

1.2 Research Objective

To assess the relationship between library-led scholarly communication training and research visibility at PAC University.

1.3 Research Question

What is the relationship between library-led scholarly communication training and research visibility at PAC University?

2. Literature Review

Academic library-led scholarly communication training is defined as systematic capacity-building activities offered by academic libraries to train researchers in the knowledge and skills needed to effectively produce, communicate, publish, disseminate, and promote scholarly works. The indicators of library-led scholarly communication training include availability of training programs, participation in such programs, frequency, relevance and usefulness, and competencies in scholarly communication topics including academic writing, citing and referencing, selection of journals, scholarly publishing and communication, open access, copyright and author rights, researcher identifier systems, publishing ethics, and research metrics. Research visibility is defined as the extent to which scholarly research can be found, accessed, disseminated, used, and acknowledged by the academic community and the larger public via scholarly and digital communication platforms (Orduña Malea & Font Julián, 2024). Indicators of research visibility include discoverability, accessibility, dissemination, acknowledgment of researchers' contributions, and perceptions of research-output visibility. These two concepts are clearly connected because researchers' ability to communicate their research effectively can affect their visibility.

In the dynamic domain of scholarly communication, academic libraries have expanded their role from merely providing information sources to helping researchers communicate and increase the visibility of their scholarly work. Studies done in India suggest increased interest in practices that improve the visibility, citation, and impact of research outputs (Majhi et al., 2023). Academic libraries in the United States have also begun developing research-impact and visibility services for researchers through scholarly metrics, research visibility, and related

support activities (Malone, 2023). This shows that contemporary researchers need competencies not only to publish scholarly work but also to choose appropriate platforms for publication and dissemination, manage scholarly profiles, understand research metrics, and communicate findings to broader audiences. It can be concluded that library-based scholarly communication skills development training plays an important role in building the competencies scholars need.

In Africa, however, academic libraries have supported researchers at various stages of research through different types of support, depending on institutional capabilities. For instance, research from some selected African academic libraries indicates the creation of research support and scholarly communication units, with increasing engagement of librarians in the research process while identifying gaps in emerging research support competencies (Leonard et al., 2023). Social media, as one of the digital platforms, has also been used in Nigeria to disseminate scholarly outputs, with findings indicating a positive correlation between social media utilization, scholarly output, and visibility of librarians (Adetayo, 2023). This illustrates the importance of competencies in scholarly communication, digital dissemination, research impact, and related areas that enable researchers to communicate their outputs to broader audiences.

In Kenya, university libraries have provided training and research support services to improve researchers' scholarly communication skills. Training and research support services, such as scholarly writing training services, provided by university libraries at the University of Embu and the Kenya Methodist University were noted to enhance postgraduate research; thus, the recommendation for incorporation of scholarly-writing training services in postgraduate programmes (Maina et al., 2023). Also, university libraries in Kenya offer research support services for doctoral researchers, which include credible journals, open access publishing, among others (Sawe et al., 2024). Recently, there is evidence of Kenyan university libraries offering researchers several scholarly communication channels, which include peer-reviewed journals, academic conferences, and open access options; however, barriers such as costs, publication delays, lack of librarian support, and researcher self-efficacy in choosing suitable channels continue to exist (Mutegi et al., 2025). The above studies highlight that while scholarly communication services and channels exist within universities, researchers may not use them effectively because of limited competence.

Despite the growing literature on scholarly communication and library-based research support, an empirical gap remains regarding the relationship between library-led scholarly communication training and research visibility. The existing studies have largely examined specific aspects of scholarly communication, including scholarly-writing training, digital dissemination, research-support services, and the availability and use of scholarly communication channels. However, limited empirical evidence has established the extent to which researchers' participation in library-led scholarly communication training is associated with the visibility of their research outputs, particularly in Kenyan universities. This study therefore examined the relationship between library-led scholarly communication training and research visibility at Pan-African Christian University (PAC University), Kenya.

3. Materials and Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey approach within a convergent mixed-methods framework to examine the relationship between library-led scholarly communication training and research visibility at Pan-African Christian University (PAC), Kenya. The broader study targeted teaching staff, postgraduate students, library staff, and staff from the Directorate of Research and Innovation. For this article, the analysis focused on the teaching staff, who were the primary respondents for the quantitative component. A total of 40 teaching staff were sampled using simple random sampling, of whom 35 provided usable responses, representing an 87.5% response rate.

The data were gathered from structured questionnaire surveys distributed to the teaching faculty, with five-point Likert scale items on library-mediated scholarly communication training and research visibility. In the larger research project, semi-structured interviews were conducted with library staff and the Directorate of Research and Innovation, along with focus group discussions with postgraduate students to gain qualitative insights into the topic. The data collection tools were pretested at St. Paul's University, Nairobi Campus, where 13 respondents participated and were excluded from the main study. Experts checked content, construct, and face validity. The reliability test yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .942 for library-led scholarly communication training and .924 for research visibility, indicating high internal consistency.

Quantitative data were coded and analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation were computed in order to describe the data obtained from the respondents. The normality assumption was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests before carrying out inferential analysis. Based on Shapiro-Wilk results, there was no significant departure from normality for library-led scholarly communication training ($p=.082$) and research visibility ($p=.095$). Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was then used to determine the direction and extent of association between library-led scholarly communication training and research visibility. The qualitative data collected as part of the larger study were analyzed thematically and used to supplement the quantitative results obtained. The study adhered to ethical standards throughout.

4. Results and Discussion

The study used a descriptive survey methodology within a convergent mixed-methods paradigm to investigate the association between library-based scholarly communication training and research visibility at Pan-African Christian University (PAC), Kenya. In the wider study, the population considered was teaching staff, postgraduate students, library staff, and research and innovation department staff. In this article, the quantitative data collection method targeted teaching staff, whose responses were collected through a structured questionnaire. Of the 40 teaching staff sampled using simple random sampling, 35 responded to the questionnaire, giving a response rate of 87.5%. The respondents included teaching staff with varying demographics and professional attributes, including differences in gender, age, educational level, professional rank, and years of experience.

4.1 Library-Led Scholarly Communication Training

The study sought to analyze teaching staff perceptions of the library's provision of scholarly communication training and its contribution to making research visible. The study found positive perceptions of the PAC University Library's training provision. As seen in Table 1, the top-rated factor was the relevance of scholarly communication training to teaching staff

(M=3.91, SD=0.85), followed by copyright, authors' rights, and licensing (M=3.86, SD=0.94). They also reported increased knowledge of ways to make research visible (M=3.77, SD=0.87) and improved skills in managing researcher profiles and publications (M=3.77, SD=0.88).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Scholarly Communication Training Programs

Statement	N	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	M	S.D
a) The university library offers scholarly communication training relevant to teaching staff	35	0(0.0)	1(2.9)	6(17.1)	23(65.7)	5(14.3)	3.91	0.85
b) I have participated in library-led training on scholarly publishing or research visibility	35	1(2.9)	8(22.9)	9(25.7)	11(31.4)	6(17.1)	3.49	1.07
c) Library training has improved my understanding of how to increase the visibility of my research	35	0(0.0)	3(8.6)	8(22.9)	16(45.7)	8(22.9)	3.77	0.87
d) I have gained skills from the library on managing researcher profiles and publication records	35	0(0.0)	4(11.4)	7(20.0)	17(48.6)	7(20.0)	3.77	0.88
e) The library provides guidance on copyright, author rights, and licensing	35	1(2.9)	3(8.6)	7(20.0)	16(45.7)	8(22.9)	3.86	0.94
f) I am aware of training on author identifiers such as ORCID and Google Scholar	35	0(0.0)	5(14.3)	8(22.9)	14(40.0)	8(22.9)	3.77	0.94
g) Library training has increased my awareness of citation impact and research metrics	35	1(2.9)	3(8.6)	7(20.0)	17(48.6)	7(20.0)	3.77	0.91
h) I am aware of training on identifying and avoiding predatory journals provided by the library	35	0(0.0)	5(14.3)	11(31.4)	14(40.0)	5(14.3)		

A gap exists between training availability and participation. Although 80.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that scholarly communication training was available, 48.5% reported participating. The relatively low average participation score (M = 3.49, SD = 1.07) indicates that although scholarly communication training was available, participation was not always ensured. This is a key point because participation in scholarly communication training helps

researchers gain practical knowledge of how to publish, disseminate, profile, and be discoverable.

The findings align with results from Kenya, where university libraries are becoming scholarly writers and research support providers. For example Maina et al. (2023) found that scholarly communication training from the library assisted postgraduate research, and Sawe et al. (2024) identified that Kenyan university libraries provided research support services to doctoral students. The current findings go beyond previous work and show that the availability of training does not necessarily lead to researchers' participation.

4.2 Research Visibility Outcomes

Teaching staff viewed research visibility quite favorably. The teaching staff expressed the highest satisfaction with the availability of PAC University research to a broad academic community (M = 3.89, SD = 0.83), closely followed by the discoverability of research through online academic search engines (M = 3.80, SD = 0.83). The accurate representation of researchers' contributions in terms of his/her research output was also rated relatively high (M = 3.77, SD = 0.88).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Research Visibility Outcomes

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	S.D
a) My research publications are easily discoverable through online academic search engines	0 (0%)	1 (2.9%)	5 (14.3%)	17 (48.6%)	12 (34.3%)	3.80	0.83
b) My research outputs authored by PAC University teaching staff are accessible to a wide scholarly audience	0 (0%)	1 (2.9%)	3 (8.6%)	19 (54.3%)	12 (34.3%)	3.89	0.83
c) My published research receives citations from other scholars	0 (0%)	2 (5.7%)	6 (17.1%)	20 (57.1%)	7 (20.0%)	3.66	0.84
d) My published work receives citations from other scholars	0 (0%)	2 (5.7%)	6 (17.1%)	20 (57.1%)	7 (20.0%)	3.66	0.84
e) My research is visible in recognized scholarly databases and indexing platforms	1 (2.9%)	3 (8.6%)	4 (11.4%)	18 (51.4%)	9 (25.7%)	3.66	0.91

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	S.D
f) The online visibility of my research outputs has improved in recent years	1 (2.9%)	3 (8.6%)	4 (11.4%)	18 (51.4%)	9 (25.7%)	3.66	0.91
g) My publications are frequently accessed or downloaded by other researchers	0 (0%)	3 (8.6%)	9 (25.7%)	17 (48.6%)	6 (17.1%)	3.46	0.89
h) My research profiles accurately reflect my research outputs	0 (0%)	2 (5.7%)	4 (11.4%)	19 (54.3%)	10 (28.6%)	3.77	0.88
i) Overall, my research outputs have high visibility within my discipline	0 (0%)	3 (8.6%)	5 (14.3%)	20 (57.1%)	7 (20.0%)	3.60	0.88

The results indicate that research visibility at PAC University was higher in terms of accessibility and discoverability than in other dimensions such as downloads, citations, and discipline. This matters because research visibility is a multidimensional phenomenon involving the capacity of research output to be discovered, accessed, communicated, and recognized across scholarly and digital environments. This means that high accessibility and discoverability do not necessarily increase downloads, citations, or research impact. According to the results, researchers need competencies in strategically disseminating research through appropriate channels and researcher-profile systems. It is in accordance with Fuhr & Monnin (2024) who indicated the need for researcher profile systems to strengthen researchers' identities and the discoverability of their scholarly output.

4.3 Diagnostic Tests

The tests for normality were conducted before analyzing the association between library-led scholarly communication training and research visibility using the Pearson product-moment correlation. The Shapiro-Wilk test showed non-significant results for library-led scholarly communication training ($p=.082$) and research visibility ($p=.095$). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test also showed non-significant results for both variables. Because the observed p -values were greater than .05, the results indicated no statistically significant deviation from normality. Thus, the assumptions for Pearson correlation were sufficiently met.

4.4 Relationship Between Library-Led Scholarly Communication Training and Research Visibility

Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between library-led scholarly communication training and research visibility among the teaching staff. The analysis used 35 valid responses.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Between Library-Led Scholarly Communication Training and Research Visibility

		Training participation	Research Visibility
Training participation	Pearson Correlation (r)	1	.682
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	35	35
Research Visibility	Pearson Correlation (r)	.682	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	35	35

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The findings showed a very strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between library-led scholarly communication training and research visibility, $r(33) = .682, p < .001$. Hence, the more respondents participated in library-led scholarly communication training, the more visible their research became. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = .465$) indicates that 46.5% of the variance in research visibility was statistically associated with variance in training participation among respondents. It must, however, be noted that this is an association and not a causal relationship.

This finding is consistent with the literature that links scholarly communication practices and research discoverability/dissemination. Majhi et al. (2023) pointed out open access, repositories, and digital dissemination as mechanisms for improving research visibility. In addition, Malone (2023) noted the increasing role of academic libraries in supporting research impact and visibility. This finding adds an empirical perspective by showing a relationship between training participation and research visibility, rather than analyzing individual mechanisms separately.

Another contribution of the result is in the Kenyan literature. Maina et al. (2023) highlighted the benefits of scholarly writing training offered by libraries. Similarly, Sawe et al., (2024) found that libraries offer diverse research support services to researchers. However, some of the challenges that Mutegi et al. (2025) found include low researcher self-efficacy and underutilization of scholarly communication platforms. The current research shows that library-led training may help address these challenges.

4.5 Qualitative Evidence and Integration of Findings

Qualitative findings complemented the quantitative ones. Participants noted that APA referencing, Zotero, journal choice, publications, and identifying predatory journals were useful areas for library training. Participants also needed advanced training in ORCID, Scopus, researcher profiling, research metrics, and publishing ethics.

Qualitative findings also explained the gap between the presence of training opportunities and training participation. Some participants said they became aware of library support services only when they faced research and publication issues. This means that training has to be delivered frequently and via targeted programmes rather than through the initiative of researchers themselves.

Both qualitative and quantitative findings agree that the library's scholarly communication training programme is viewed favorably by the academic community and positively contributes to research visibility. The weak point is participation and training frequency. Nevertheless, a

strong positive correlation indicates that participation in library scholarly communication training significantly influences research visibility.

The results show that PAC University Library delivers scholarly communication training that covers domains related to researchers' ability to disseminate and communicate their research. While researchers rated the training positively and found it relevant, uptake was lower than awareness. Researchers also rated research visibility positively, especially in terms of accessibility and online discoverability.

Importantly, Pearson correlation revealed a statistically significant positive association between scholarly communication training conducted by libraries and research visibility, $r(33) = .682, p < .001$. This result, complemented by qualitative evidence of practical knowledge gained from the training, indicates that scholarly communication training is a key element of library research support services. Nevertheless, this relationship does not imply causality, and other determinants may also influence research visibility.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that library-led scholarly communication training plays an important role in enhancing research visibility at PAC University. Greater engagement with training was associated with improved research visibility, suggesting that researchers who develop scholarly communication competencies are better positioned to communicate, disseminate, and increase the discoverability of their research outputs. The findings affirm the academic library as an active partner in supporting researchers beyond access to information resources by equipping them with practical skills for effective scholarly communication. However, variations in participation and frequency of training suggest a need for continuous, targeted, and researcher-centered training programmes to ensure that more researchers acquire and apply the skills required to strengthen the visibility and reach of their scholarly work.

6. Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, the PAC University Library should take the lead in strengthening the provision of scholarly communication training through systematic and progressive programmes rather than one-off events. The library should place greater emphasis on advanced topics such as ORCID and researcher profiling, research metrics, Scopus, publishing ethics, journal selection, and strategies for improving research visibility. In addition, the PAC University Library and the Directorate of Research and Innovation should work collaboratively to increase researcher participation in training and strengthen scholarly communication competencies among postgraduate students and teaching staff. This collaboration would help integrate library-led scholarly communication training more effectively into the university's broader research support and research development activities.

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