Journal Visibility and Indexing of Faculty Journals in Delta State University, Abraka Nigeria

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DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.7012007

Received: 21 November 2023; Revised: 04 December 2023; Accepted: 07 December 2023; Published: 27 December 2023

ABSTRACT

This study investigated journal visibility and indexing of faculty journals in Delta State University Abraka. The objective of the study is to determine the influence of visibility on indexing of faculty journals in Delta State University Abraka. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study is 12 editors-in-chief of the various faculty journals in Delta State University, Abraka. Since the population is small and manageable, the researcher selected the entire population. The instrument that was used for this research study was a questionnaire and checklist. The face and content validities of the questionnaire were determined by experts in the Department of Library and Information Science in Delta State University, Abraka for thorough scrutiny and checking of the instrument to make sure that the questionnaires were relevant to the study. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the Split-half reliability method, which gives a measure of internal consistency. Coefficient of determination was used to answer the research questions. The Pearson's product- moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that there is no significant relationship between visibility and indexing of faculty journals in Delta State University Abraka. In view of the findings, it recommended amongst others, that the journals' editorial board should focus on improving the academic quality of the research published in the journals.

Keywords: Visibility; Indexing; Academic Journals; Universities

INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of any academic institution, especially universities, revolves, primarily, on the creation, dissemination and preservation of knowledge. According to Ani and Onyancha (2012), universities play a significant role in the advancement of science in most countries by contributing to the production of new knowledge, its transmission, its dissemination and its use in technical innovation. University research is essential in developing the industrial, social and cultural values of a nation. The quality of research that is conducted at a given university, to a large extent determines the quality of expertise that is imparted to the larger society.

Virtually all academic institutions, and a large number of commercial organizations, assess individuals for employment or promotion by their publication record, and the fate of whole departments or project teams can rest on their success as judged by the number and impact of their publications. The publishing productivity of an academic staff is often used as an index of departmental and institutional prestige and is strongly associated with the reputation, visibility and advancement in the academic reward structure of an individual academic staff. Thus, publication can not only advance the career of an individual, but can also enhance the image of an institution generally and bolster the overall reputation of its academics.

Different strategies and technologies are adopted to preserve and disseminate knowledge from research

conducted in the universities. One of such strategies is journal publication. Journal represents one of the main communication media, particularly in the field of natural, technical and biomedical sciences (Masic & Kujundzic, 2013). The most important role of scientific journals is the publication and dissemination of scientific articles. The source of scientific and technical information can only be human-scientist or expert whose scientific and professional work creates knowledge in an area. The primary publication represents the document containing the text with basic information in original form prepared by the author.

Journals according to field covered can be divided into four groups: highly specialized journals (publish materials from the specific field), general biomedical journals (intended for a wide range of users), classic journals (deals with problem from only one biomedical field) and primary research journals (professional literature and a major source of scientific information) (Masic & Kujundzic, 2013). The functions of a journal include protection of author's intellectual property, its presentation to the scientific community and securing the path for gaining professional recognition and advancement (Masic & Sabzghabaee, 2014).

In Nigeria, virtually all the universities have journals tied to each faculty, referred to as faculty-based journals. Majority of these journals are mostly buried in different libraries in the institutions with very few scholars and students accessing them. This development makes researchers outside the universities to depend highly on the information generated from other foreign journals, considered as international journals. It is no longer news that the academic publishing world, visible online, is principally dominated by scholars with institutional affiliations in the developed world (Akidi, et al., 2021). For instance, research outputs (indexed by Scopus) from developed nations in 2016 accounted for 60% of the universal research output (National Science Board, 2018).

According to Venitha (as cited in Dang, 2017) research capacity in the form of published peer reviewed articles, master's and doctoral output is disturbingly low in Africa, with African Universities producing less than 1% of global scholarly articles. This point to the fact that despite many valuable research findings churned out worldwide, many researchers in Africa were not getting sufficient access to these research findings. Equally, the valuable research findings stemming from Africa were not reflected in the global scholarly articles. Several studies attributed this situation to cost of subscription fees and low quality of research work (Heller, et al., 2015). According to Akidi, et al. (2021), research outputs published in local or national and subnational sources remain very minuscule and poorly cited, when compared to research published in international sources. According to the National Science Board (2018), only 10.9% of the Scopus-indexed papers published in 2016 were from authors in non-BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) developing nations.

The chronic disparities and inequities in the world of scholarly publishing between the developed and developing countries are attributable to several factors, such as the enduring dominance of English language journals over the past decades (Henshall, 2018); difficult access to tertiary-level science and quality research training (Okeke, et al., 2017); poor collaboration among researchers, policymakers, and industry players (Lavis et al., 2010); and the lack of skilled human resources possibly due to the migration of trained professionals from less-developed to more-developed settings (Cash-Gibson, et al., 2018).

The above factors focus primarily on language, training, collaboration and lack of research competence. However, the researcher believed that this may not be entirely true. This is because, universities in Nigeria have faculty-based journals, which publish quality research works. They are mostly peer-reviewed and even appear to have more quality than some so-called international journals, which considered predatory despite their large visibility. The challenge is that majority of these faculty-based journals are not indexed by indexing services.

Indexation of a journal is considered a reflection of its quality. Indexing is a systematic process of arranging

the list of cited articles identified as source and each cited article in turn accompanied by a list of citing articles identified as reference. An indexed journal is considered to have a better quality and reputation as compared to non-indexed journals most of the times (Chatterjee, 2019). However sometimes an indexed journal need not necessarily have a better quality than a non-indexed journal. This is because, most of the established journals refused to apply and undergo a long and tight process to be indexed (Choudhri, et al., 2015).

For a journal to be indexed, it has to pass through a rigorous review process of certain requirements done by a journal indexer. There are many indexing agencies available at present. While some indexing agencies such as Scopus are provided by publishers, others such as PubMed are affiliated with institutions like National institute of health (NIH). Irrespective of the indexing agency, for inclusion of the journal in the database (indexing agency) the journal has to formally apply and fulfil all the parameters set by the indexing agency (Garner, et al., 2017). The indexing agencies can only index titles or only the abstract and/or references or full articles. Once a journal is indexed by the indexing agency, the journal is immediately made available to all users of that database. The major indexing agencies include Web of Science, Scopus, Digital Bibliography & Library Project, MEDLINE, PubMed, PubMed Central, CrossRef, Google Scholar.

Despite the premium placed on indexed journals and the benefits to journals and its authors, it is sad to note that very few Nigerian faculty-based journals are covered by indexing and abstracting services. If such coverage is the definition of a quality journal, then most Nigerian faculty-based journals fall outside this. Therefore, requiring Nigerian academics to publish in quality journals is effectively telling them to send their articles to foreign-based journals for publication. According to Ayoub, et al. (2019), publication by scholars of Nigerian universities on indexed journals is not only a tool for scholarly communication but also a sure way to reach larger audiences and equally represent the performance and global visibility of the institutions. This global visibility extends to the authors of such scholarly publications. Even when the content of these faculty-based journals is great, it does not find an audience on its own unless the right things are done by the authors and publishers, especially as it has to do with indexation. There is thus a need for the faculties of Delta State University, Abraka, to consider finding ways of indexing their journals. One of such ways is visibility.

Visibility of publications is usually associated to the extent in which the said published work is read and or cited by other scholars and in a broader perspective how much the paper contributes to the growth of human knowledge. Looking at journal visibility, Zainab and Nor (2008) remarked that journal visibility is sometimes synonymous with journals that have achieved some measure of impact in the global scholarly community. This means that for Nigerian publications to achieve visibility, they must have secured reasonable impact in the growth of knowledge and this cannot be obtained when the papers are neither read nor cited by others.

Visibility is determined by how avidly published work is received by the academic or scientific community. Here is where indexing databases such as Google scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, and many others comes in as useful tools for recounting what peers have validated. Visibility is therefore an indirect means of appraising the quality of publications (Moed, 2007). This leads to the matter of how-to best measure visibility. According to Harnad (2007), “impact measures the extent to which the results of research findings are read, used, cited and applied in future research efforts” (p. 2). Along these lines, full-text access of articles is considered to be one factor influencing the odds of consultation, retrieval and citation of a document (Moed, 2007).

The poor or low ranking of Nigerian universities by webometrics and other globally acceptable ranking authorities is as a result of the poor visibility of Nigerian scholars (Ati, 2017). For example, Ati (2017) attributes poor ranking to low visibility on the web and inactivity of scholars and researchers to contribute meaningfully to the world of knowledge. In most cases, institutional framework for effective activity is deficient and most research information does not go beyond the four walls of the university (Ati, 2017).

Academic staff in recent years have indicated an interest in online platforms to evaluate their scholarly impact (Tripathy et al., 2017), and indicated their willingness to adopt online platforms for research dissemination. For example, In September 2021, the National Universities Commission (NUC) in Nigeria forwarded a memo to all universities in Nigeria encouraging all academic staff to register in databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and ORCID with the aim of increasing their visibility and attract university ranks both national and international.

In view of the above, the aim of this study is to examine the impact of journal organization, visibility on indexing of faculty journals in Delta State University, Abraka Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The faculty members of Delta State University, like in any other academic institution, actively engage in research and scholarly activities, resulting in the publication of numerous journals. However, there is a lack of visibility of these faculty journals, which may negatively impact their accessibility and recognition in the academic community. The absence of a comprehensive system to manage and promote faculty journals may lead to challenges such as difficulty in tracking and accessing published journals, limited visibility and recognition, and missed opportunities for collaboration and citation. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the current state of indexing and visibility of faculty journals at Delta State University and identify potential barriers and opportunities for improvement. Addressing this problem will contribute to enhancing the scholarly impact of faculty journals, promoting knowledge dissemination, and fostering a culture of research excellence at the university.

Research Questions

The following were the research questions for the study:

- What is the relationship between visibility and indexing of faculty journals in Delta State University Abraka

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- There is no significant relationship between visibility and indexing of faculty journals in Delta State University Abraka

LITERATURE REVIEW

The essence of academic publications is to increase their usefulness by making them visible to the public. Visibility can be referred as the degree to which something is seen by the public. To achieve visibility in an academic field means that people know your name, think highly of your scientific contributions and are familiar with your work (Mauvais, 2016). To enhance the visibility of academic publications in this 21st century, open access repositories are highly needed. Open Access Repositories is defined as electronic/digital platforms that hold academic publication and provide immediate, free access to academic publications permanently for individuals to browse, download, read or disseminate (Neil, 2006).

Academic publication in open access repositories makes it available on the internet and permits anyone to browse, download, read, share, print, copy, index or link to other articles; use them as the law permits, and does not require any technical, financial or legal barriers except the ones associated with logging into the

internet itself. The necessary copyright condition required on this database is to properly acknowledge the authors through reference and citations. Publications in open access repositories demands that authors and publishers give irreversible, worldwide, free and permanent right to all users to access, use, disseminate, copy, and openly show case the work; transform and share the information openly in any format desired, provided that the authors are properly acknowledged. This implies that open access repositories make authors to publish their articles for impact and not just for money.

Open Access Repositories are authentic databases for research outputs. They are compilation of scholarly outputs that help to minimize plagiarism and duplication of research. Informed scholars know that the contents of OARs are more useful than most websites. Aliyu as cited in Ukwoma and Dike (2017) stated that the use of information has permeated all segments of human endeavour thus, the need of information utilization by students and lecturers have become very necessary to achieve their academic pursuit. Since OARs are globally accessible and contain academic publications, they become very necessary for researchers because of the original research works they contain. To upload academic publications on open access repositories, Bailey (as cited in Okpala, 2017) recommended two complementary strategies which are:

Self-Archiving (Green Open Access): This is one of the formats by which scholars use to deposit their journal articles in open access repositories commonly called, self-archiving When these repositories conform to standards created by the Open Archives Initiative, then search engines and other tools can treat the separate repositories as one. Users then need not know which repositories exist or where they are located in order to find and make use of their contents. Self-archiving is the process by which authors upload their research outputs freely on electronic platforms for anyone to use. The articles could be manuscripts or already published papers. Manuscripts (pre-print) are original versions of articles that have not undergone peer review or editorial review and modification. Post-prints are the final versions of articles that are published. They can either be the publisher's version of the article or an updated preprint that the author creates to reflect any changes made during the peer review and editorial processes. Self-archiving has some strategies in itself, as identified by Bailey in Okpala (2017) who stated that 'the most common ways that e- prints are made available on the Internet are: (1) authors' personal Websites, (2) disciplinary archives, (3) institutional-unit archives, or (4) institutional repositories. But authors at times, find it difficult to do self- archiving due to some apprehensions about publishers' policies. This is why SHERPA-RoMEO exists – to offer list of publisher permissions policies with respect to self-archiving.

Open Access Journals (Gold Open Access): These are journals that are freely available to scholars online for downloads and use. According to Suber (2017), Digital Academic journals that are freely available for everyone to browse, read download, copy, use and share without any technical and financial barriers are referred to open access journals. Examples of such journals include: Nature Communications; Plos One; Royal Society Open Science; Scientific Reports; African Journal of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition and Development; Open Access Journal of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants; College & Research Libraries; Information Technologies and International Development; Scientific Data; Energies; Open Engineering, New Journal of Physics; Open Physics etc. Some are subsidized, and some require payments on behalf of the author. It has become very pertinent for scholars to engage on new journals dedicated to open access and assist the already established journals to migrate to open access to enable researched articles to disseminate as widely as possible. The full implementation of open access ensures the removal of most of the copyright restrictions and allows researchers to use all published materials. Money has been a great challenge in publishing and using academic articles but with this open access, there will not be any subscription charges on authors and users because, the journals will use alternative methods to cover these expenses. The alternative method for such fund is government and foundations that support research, organizations that engage researchers, philanthropist that support open access, gains from add-ons on texts, balance from cancelled journals that collect fees or researchers that are willing to support the journal. Other useful alternatives can be explored too.

ISSN No. 2454-6186 | DOI: 10.47772/IJRISS |Volume VII Issue XII 2023

METHODS

This study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study is 12 editors-in-chief of the various faculty journals in Delta State University, Abraka. Since the population is small and manageable, the researcher used the entire population. The instrument that was used for this research study was a questionnaire with checklist. It contains three sections. Section A contains the title of the journal and its corresponding faculty, section B contains Visibility of Journal Rating Scale, which was used to measure the extent to which the journals are visible to the researchers outside the university community; while section C contains Indexation of Journal Checklist, which was used to measure the indexation of the journals by any of the listed indexing bodies or services. The Visibility of Journal Rating Scale was structured on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 4 for strongly agree. On the other hand, the Indexation of Journal Checklist was structured on a dichotomous level of Yes and No, as the case may be.

The Instrument was subjected to both face and content validity. To ensure the face and content validity of the instrument, copies were given to experts in the Department of Library and Information Science in Delta State University, Abraka for thorough scrutiny and checking of the instrument to make sure that the questionnaires were relevant to the study. Their comments and suggestions helped to make final copy of the instrument by removing all the duplicate contents and ensuring only items that are relevant to the objectives of the study were retained. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the Split-half reliability method, which gives a measure of internal consistency. The split reliability was employed using 30 editorial board members from the Delta State University of Science and Technology Ozoro, Delta State. The Spearman- Brown Prophecy formula was used to obtain the reliability of the whole test (step up). Whole reliability as well as section by section reliability was carried out on the instrument to determine each section's reliability. The reliability coefficient of the whole instrument as well as each of the five sections are: Whole instrument: r = 0.90, Section B: Visibility of Journal Rating Scale, r = 0.66, Section D: Indexation of Journal Checklist, r = 0.81. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient were higher than 0.50, which is reliable and appropriate for use in the study.

The questionnaire was personally distributed by the researchers to all the Chief Editors of the journals of the various Faculties of Delta State University Abraka. The questionnaire was collected on the spot where necessary. The coefficient of determination was used to answer the research question. The Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypothess at the 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is relationship between visibility and indexing of faculty journals in Delta State University Abraka?

Table 1: Pearson's corelation and coefficient of determination of the influence of visibility on indexing of faculty journals in Delta State University Abraka

Variables	**Mean**	***SD***	***r***	r^2	r^2%	**Remark**
Visibility	2.83	0.61				
Indexing	0.05	0.08	0.465	0.216	21.6	Positive Influence

As shown in Table 1, a Pearson's correlation coefficient of determination was used to determine the influence of visibility on indexing of faculty journals in Delta State University Abraka. The result revealed a

positive influence (r = 0.465; r^2 = 0.216; r^2% = 21.6). The result further showed that visibility contributed 21.6% to the variability in indexing.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between visibility and indexing of faculty journals in Delta State University Abraka

Table 2: Pearson's correlation coefficient of the relationship between visibility and indexing of faculty journals in Delta State University Abraka

Variables	Mean	*SD*	*r*	r^2	r^2%	*p*	Remark
Visibility	2.83	0.61	0.465	0.216	21.6	0.149	No Significant
Indexing	0.05	0.08					

Table 2 shows a Pearson's correlation coefficient, which was used to examine the nature of the relationship between visibility and indexing of faculty journals in Delta State University Abraka. From the result, r = 0.465, r^2 = 0.216, p>0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted, meaning that there is no significant relationship between visibility and indexing of faculty journals in Delta State University Abraka. Visibility contributed 21.6% to the variability in indexing.

DISCUSSION

Influence of Visibility on Indexing of Faculty Journals in Delta State University Abraka

The finding revealed that visibility contributed 21.6% to the variability in indexing. A corresponding hypothesis showed that there is no significant relationship between visibility and indexing of faculty journals in Delta State University Abraka. This finding suggests that visibility does not necessarily influence indexing, that other factors might have a stronger influence on indexing. Factors such as the academic quality of the journal, its adherence to editorial standards, the reputation of the authors and the institution, or the alignment of the journal's content with the scope of the indexing service could outweigh the impact of visibility in the specific context of Delta State University Abraka.

The above finding agrees with the result of previous studies. For example, Aksnes et al. (2008) found that journals with high visibility were more likely to be indexed in major academic databases. Bornmann and Mutz (2010) also found that journals with high visibility were more likely to be cited in other journals.

CONCLUSION

In view of the findings, it can be concluded that the faculty journals of Delta State University Abraka are visible, but there is no significant relationship between visibility and indexing. While the journals are visible, they may not be cited or referenced enough to meet the indexing criteria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above finding, the researcher recommended the following:

1. The journals' editorial board should focus on improving the academic quality of the research published in the journals. This could involve setting higher standards for the acceptance of papers, requiring more rigorous peer review, and ensuring that the research is relevant to the field.
2. Adhere to clear and transparent editorial policies. This will help to ensure that the journals meet the standards of the indexing bodies and that authors know what to expect when submitting their papers.

3. Collaborate with other journals and organizations. This can help to increase the visibility of the journals and to attract more citations.
4. Continue to focus on journal organization and visibility. These are still important factors that can influence the indexing status of a journal, even if they are not the only factors.

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