

**INDEXING AND VISIBILITY OF FACULTY JOURNALS IN DELTA STATE
UNIVERSITY, ABRAKA, NIGERIA**

By

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Abstract

Journal publishing is an integral part of the university academic activity. This study was carried out to investigate indexing and visibility of faculty journals in Delta State University Abraka. Two research questions and one hypothesis were raised to guide the investigation. This study adopted a correlational research design. The population was made up of 12 editors-in-chief of the faculty journals in Delta State University, Abraka. Total enumeration sampling technique was used in the study, as such the entire population was used in the study. Using a questionnaire and checklist, data were collected from the editors of all the journals in the university. The study found that few faculty journals are indexed by few indexing bodies. The faculty journals are highly visible, however, there was no significant relationship between their visibility and the extent to which they are indexed. Recommendations were made based on the findings.

Key Words: Faculty Journals, Indexing, Visibility, Delta State University, Nigeria.

Introduction

Universities thrive in the collection of their intellectual outputs in the form of textbooks, journals, articles, thesis and dissertations, technical reports etc. emanating from their institutions. According to Masic and Kujundzic (2013), universities adopt different strategies and technologies to preserve and disseminate knowledge from research conducted in the universities. One of such strategies is journal publications. In Nigeria, most universities have journals tied to the university or to faculties in the university. These are referred to as faculty-based journals. Today, in the academic publishing world, very high premium is placed on journals as acceptable means of scholarly communications, especially those journals that are indexed.

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 (Chatterjee, 2019). 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), each journal must go through a rigorous review processes before it can be indexed. 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). Once a journal is indexed by the indexing agency, the journal is immediately made available to all users of that database, thereby bringing about more visibility for the content of the journal.

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 and is determined by how avidly published work is received by the academic or scientific community. Visibility of publications is usually associated with the extent to 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. Visibility is therefore an indirect means of appraising the quality of publications (Moed, 2007). While there are several well-known faculty-based journals that publish quality, research works in Nigerian universities, there is the argument that many of these journals are not indexed by indexing services hence, are not visible to other academics.

This implies 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 or indexed by any of the indexing bodies (Choudhri, et al., 2015). According to Ati (2017), there is poor or low ranking of Nigerian

universities by webometrics and other globally acceptable ranking authorities as a result of the poor visibility of Nigerian scholars. He further stressed that most research information does not go beyond the four walls of the university (Ati, 2017). In view of this assertions, this study aims to examine the impact of journal visibility on indexing of faculty journals using faculty-based journals in Delta State University, Abraka Nigeria as case study.

Research Questions

1. To what extent are faculty journals of Delta State University Abraka indexed by indexing services?
2. To what extent are faculty journals of Delta State University Abraka visible?

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

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

Literature Review

Journals serve as the means through which results of research are organized and communicated to the scientific community (Johnson, Watkinson, and Mabe 2018). Today, indexing of journals has become a crucial feature that aids both researchers and journal publishers in the field of research publication to find and access publications easily.

Indexing is the orderly and systematic arrangement of information for the ease of access of information from a reliable source. According to Abbadia (2022), journal indexing (also known as bibliographic indexes or bibliographic databases) are collections of journal titles grouped by discipline, subject, or publishing type. On looking back at the history of indexing, Eugene Garfield and Fr. Robert Busa are considered pioneers in modern journal

indexing. Garfield, in 1960, introduced the indexing of research papers published in academic journals. Garfield's Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) began with the citation index of Science journals later followed by Social Sciences" and also Arts and Humanities (Dhammi & Rehan, 2016). When the information is from an indexed journal, the credibility of the information or work increases and is then worthy of referring and citing. This in turn expands the reputation of the journal as that providing quality information. Authors understand publishing of their manuscripts in indexed journals increases its authority and visibility. In the same vain, journals that are not indexed are often seen to be of an inferior or lower quality in the scientific community (Cabonero, et al., 2019; Abbadia, 2022). As such, Thomas 92022) state that indexed journals are carefully chosen by researchers to have a wide accessibility of their works. Indexed journals are considered to be of higher scientific quality as compared to non-indexed journals, in addition, indexing ensures that a journal is able to get wider accessibility to its intended audience while at the same time improving its reputation as a reliable source of high-quality information in the relevant field (Balhara, 2012).

There are many indexing agencies in existence 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.

While it has been established that Nigerian researchers produce some quality research (Gray, Trotter, and Willmers 2012), there is the fear that these research is yet to be a reasonable part of the global pool because the majority of these publications are largely focused on print, making them to lack global visibility and impact as a result of limited circulation and discoverability (Fatoki and Obinyan 2005; Rosenberg 2000; Egbetokun et al. (2022). According to Salisu and Oyewale (2020), Nigerian research irrespective of its quality remains obscured if published through traditional print journals. Thus gain visibility, there is need for the embrace of online journal publishing among Nigerian journal editors Albornoz, Okune, and Chan (2020), Babini (2020), Nkoudou (2020).

Few authors have investigated the extent of indexing and visibility of journals published in Nigeria. Afolabi et al. (2019) carried out an analysis based on the number of scholarly articles published between (2008-2017) in 165 NUC accredited universities in Nigeria. The result showed that only 40.61% of the NUC accredited universities in Nigeria have research visibility in Scopus database. This implies that most of the research outputs of universities are not visible in Scopus. Similarly, a recent study by Asubiaro and Onaolapo (2023) evaluated the coverage of journals from Africa in Web of Science, Scopus, and CrossRef using a list of active journals published from 55 African countries compiled by Ulrich's periodicals directory and African Journals Online (AJOL) website. They found that the volume of African journals in Web of Science and Scopus databases is 7.4% (N = 166) and 7.8% (N = 174), respectively, compared to the 45.6% (N = 1,017) covered in CrossRef, while Nigerians publications accounted for 44.5% of all the African journals. Egbetokun et al. (2022) observed that most times, some local journals are poorly composed and edited, hence the major low level of indexing and low global visibility. Abdu (2023) also accented that majority of the Nigerian journals are still in print, thereby reducing its impact and value.

With challenges such as limited accessibility, limited recognition, reduced citation and limited coloration, the issue of visibility of faculty journals becomes very important because when journals are visible, they positively or negatively impact their accessibility and recognition in the academic community. Despite the premium placed on indexed journals and the benefits to journals and its authors, it is sad to note that very few faculty-based journals are covered by indexing and abstracting services (Dang, 2017). 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.

Methodology

This study adopted a correlational research design. The population was made up of 12 editors-in-chief of the faculty journals in Delta State University, Abraka. Questionnaire and checklist were used to collect data for the study. Using the split-half method, reliability coefficient of the instrument was $r = 0.90$. The instrument was personally distributed to the respondents and data collected was analysed with descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, percentage and coefficient of determination) was used to answer the research questions. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What faculty journals are indexed by indexing services in Delta State University?

Table 1: Indexed faculty journals of Delta State University Abraka

Indexing Bodies	Faculty Journals	No.	%
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Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)	Journal of Engineering Research, Innovation and Scientific Development	2	18.0
	JAFE		
EBSCO		0	0.0
EMBASE		0	0.0
Google Scholar	Journal of Engineering Research, Innovation and Scientific Development	3	27.2
	International Journal of Forensic and Medical Investigation		
	JAFE		
IJIFACTOR		0	0.0
Index Copernicus		0	0.0
InfoBase		0	0.0
ISI Indexing	Journal of Engineering Research, Innovation and Scientific Development	1	9.0
Open Access Journals Index (OAJI)	International Journal of Forensic and Medical Investigation	1	9.0
PubMed		0	0.0
The Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE)		0	0.0
SCIMAGOIJR		0	0.0
Scopus		0	0.0
		0	0.0
African Journal Online (AJOL)	Abraka Humanities	2	18.8
	JAFE		

Table 1 shows that 4 out of the 11 faculty journals are indexed. 3 (27.27%) of the journals are indexed in Google Scholar. 2 (18.18%) of the journals are indexed in Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and African Journal Online (AJOL) respectively, while 1 (9.0%) are indexed in ISI Indexing and Open Access Journals Index (OAJI) respectively. None of the journals are indexed in the EBSCO, EMBASE, IJIFACTOR, Index Copernicus, InfoBase, PubMed, Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE), SCIMAGOIJR, Scopus, and Ulrich's International periodical Directory which are very reputable indexing bodies.

The findings revealed that of the 11 faculty journals in Delta State University Abraka, only 4 of them are indexed. That is, less than half of the faculty journals in Delta State University are indexed. Also worthy of note is that the journals that are indexed, are indexed

by more than one indexing body. Considering this finding, it can be taken that faculty journals may not be categorised as very reputable. As noted by Cabonero, et al. (2019); Abbadia (2022), when journals are not indexed, they are seen to be of inferior or lower quality in the scientific community. Related to this finding is the recent report of Asubiaro and Onaolapo (2023) that the volume of Nigerian publications in some reputable databases are increasing and has accounted for 44.5% of all the African journals.

Research Question 2: To what extent are faculty journals of Delta State University Abraka visible?

Table 2: Visibility of Faculty Journals

Statement	Mean	SD
The journal is popular among staff in the faculty/university	3.64	0.92
Articles in the journal website are free to download	3.27	0.79
The journal website is user-friendly	3.27	1.10
The journal has a functional website	3.27	1.10
The journal is popular to other researchers in other universities	3.18	0.75
The journal is popular to students in other universities	3.18	0.75
Articles in the journal website are downloadable	3.09	1.04
The journal is popular to students in the faculty/university	3.00	1.00
The journal has suitable open access options	2.91	1.14
Authors are encouraged to share data used for their research for validation by other researchers	2.73	1.01
Authors are encouraged to share their published articles in other online repositories	2.64	1.03
Authors without ORCID are encouraged to sign up for one	2.27	1.10
Authors are notified by the journal websites when users download their papers	2.09	1.14
Authors are requested to provide their ORCID	2.00	1.18
Authors are notified by the journal websites when users cite their papers	1.91	0.83
Average Mean	2.83	0.99

Table 2 shows that with an average mean of 2.83, shows that the faculty journals of Delta State University Abraka are visible. Visibility indices shows that with a mean score of 3.27 respectively, the faculty journals are popular among staff in the faculty/university, articles in the

journal website are free to download, the journal website is user-friendly and they have functional websites.

Similarly, faculty journals are popular to students and researchers both within and outside the university, they have suitable open access options and authors are encouraged to share data used for their research for validation by other researchers. This finding implies that the research and scholarly works published in the faculty journals are reaching a wide audience and attracting attention within the academic community. This high visibility can have several positive implications. High visibility often correlates with increased citation rates. When faculty journals are visible by researchers, scholars, and practitioners in the field, the likelihood of these publications to be cited by others increases. This, in turn, will enhance the impact and influence of the research conducted by the faculty members. Highly visible faculty journals contribute to the dissemination of knowledge and the advancement of the academic field. This finding is not in agreement with the report by Abdu (2023) that majority of the Nigerian journals are still in print thereby reducing their visibility.

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

Table 3: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of the Relationship between Visibility and Indexing of Faculty Journals

Variables	Mean	SD	R	r^2	$r^2\%$	p	Remark
Visibility	2.83	0.61					Not
Indexing	0.05	0.08	0.465	0.216	21.6	0.149	Significant

Table 3 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.

This finding suggests that the level of visibility of faculty journals does not influence their indexing status. While visibility may contribute to indexing variability, the hypothesis suggesting no significant relationship between visibility and indexing in the context of Delta State University Abraka suggests that other factors might have a stronger influence. According to Egbetokun et al. (2022), some local journals are often poorly composed and edited, hence the major low level of indexing and low global visibility. The above finding does not agree with the result of older studies such as Aksnes et al. (2008); Bornmann and Mutz (2010) that journals with high visibility were more likely to be indexed in major academic databases.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to investigate indexing and visibility of faculty journals in Delta State University Abraka. In view of the findings, it can be concluded that only a few of the faculty journals in Delta State University Abraka are indexed by an equally few number of indexing bodies. While on the one hand the faculty journals are highly visible, however there was no significant relationship between their visibility and the extent to which they are indexed. This suggests that while the journals are visible, they may not be cited or referenced enough to meet the indexing criteria. In conclusion, the faculty journals of Delta State University Abraka are visible, but they may not have met the specific criteria of the indexing bodies.

Based on the above finding, the following recommendations are made:

1. The faculty journal editors should do more to meet indexing bodies criteria. 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.
2. The journals should collaborate with other journals and organizations. This can help to increase the visibility of the journals and to attract more citations.

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