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Discernment of Academic Staff Members on Impact Factor-ranked Journals and Academic Performance in the Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study appraises the discernment of academic staff members on impact factor-ranked journals and academic performance in the Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The aim is to posit if the insistence of the University on impact factor-ranked journals for academic growth is a drive for academic excellence or an instrument for the stagnation of academic staff growth. The population comprises all academic staff members of the University. Ninety-three (93) academic staff of the Alex-Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State participated in the study. A 46-item structured questionnaire administers to the selected respondents. The Impact factor is entrenched in scientific publishing as a measure of research output. The insistence of some academic institutions in Nigeria on Thomson Reuter and Scimago-ranked impact factor journals for appraisal of academic performance and determination of promotion, tenure, or remuneration has been with criticisms. Data are analyzed using tables, frequency counts, and simple percentages. It is apparent the University Vice Chancellor's insistence on Thomson Reuter and Scimago-ranked journals to the detriment of African-based ranked journals. Hence, departments and faculties should indicate local journals that are highly rated and used for the appraisal of academic performance and determination of promotion, tenure, or remuneration of their academic staff members.

Keywords: *Impact Factor (IF), Clarivate Analytics, SCImago, Academic excellence, Stagnation, De-linking.*

INTRODUCTION

Every profession has criteria or an index for ranking members' contributions (Okoye, 2010) and determining members' assessment, promotion, and appointment or tenure of new members. For scientists, lecturers, or scholars in higher institutions, their contributions, assessment, and promotion largely depend on the impact factor of their published works or research. In 1961, Eugene Garfield, who founded the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), created an impact factor for journals. The impact factor is an indirect bibliometric measure of the international standing of journals and the impact of articles published in such

journals (Chiejina, 2006; Harnard, 2004). A journal has a measurable impact on the field if it publishes articles cited by others (Garfield, 2006). A research or journal impact also measures citations to published journals from all fields of study. Citation counts reflect the extent to which a research publication is known or visible to the research community (Qiu, 2010) and may be a proxy or substitute for the objective quality of an article (Oswald, 2009).

Shiwani (2006) opined that a journal's impact factor contains two elements: the numerator, which is the number of citations in the current year to any items published in a journal in the previous two years, and the denominator, which is the number of substantive articles (source items) published in the same two years. Thus, a journal's impact factor is the number of citations to articles in a journal in one year ÷ Number of articles published in that journal in the previous 2 years. A higher impact factor ensures a higher impact on a journal and a higher chance of promotion for an individual researcher; a lower impact factor lowers the impact of a journal and the chances of promotion for the individual researcher. Interestingly, impact factors are recalculated every year. Repanovici (2010) estimated that there were 150,000 scientific journals globally. The number has increased in recent times.

The Garfield-founded ISI has been incorporated into the Clarivate Analytics (formerly Thomson Reuters) Web of Science, which includes the Science Citation Index (SCI) and the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI). The Clarivate Analytics calculates impact factors each year for journals it indexes and publishes the factors and indices in *Journal Citation Reports* (JCR). In addition to the Clarivate Analytics, other impact factor indexing and ranking agencies or databases include the Scopus (known as SCImago), Journals Impact Factor (JIF), Index Copernicus (IC), Global Impact Factor (GIF), Scientific Journal Impact Factor (SJIF), Eurasian Scientific Journal Index (ESJI), InfoBase Index (IBI), Universal Impact Factor (UIF), Ulrichsweb, J-Gate, Social Science Research Network (SSRN), Directory of Abstract Indexing for Journals (DAIJ), Open Academic Journals Index (OAJI), CiteFactor, Google Scholar, Directory of Indexing and Impact Factor (DIIF), Bielefeld Academic Search Engine (BASE), WorldCat, Open Access Forum, Asian Education Index, Academic Journals Database, General Impact Factor (GIF), Research Impact Factor, State Library of New South Wales, International Society for Research Activity (ISRA), Grove Online Library, Toronto Library, Stanford University Library, Science Impact Factor (SIF), UCB Library, and Florida Institute of Technology, among others (see http://isiindexing.com; www.sjifactor.inno-space.net; http://esjindex.org; www.jifactor.org; www.infobaseindex.com; www.uifactor.org; www.daij.org; www.proquest.co.uk; www.ulrichsweb.com; www.ssrn.com; www.doaj.org; www.oaji.net; www.citefactor.org; www.scholar.google.com). Despite these numerous impact factor indexing and ranking agencies or databases, only research published in

Clarivate Analytics and SCImago is recognized by some organizations or institutions as having a high impact factor.

The impact factor is ubiquitous; it has come to stay as a way of judging or determining academic or scientific productivity. The impact factor assesses the number of journals but has been used as a performance appraisal and promotion criterion for academics in some institutions. However, this has generated mixed feelings and heavy criticism from some academics and scholars. The use of impact factor for appraising and promoting lecturers generated a lot of controversies in the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), where it was first introduced as a parameter for assessing academic performance at the beginning of the 2007/2008 academic year in Nigeria (Okoye, 2010) and also in the Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State, Nigeria (AE-FUNAI). Comparatively, UNN, established in 1960, is one of Nigeria's foremost or earliest universities, and AE-FUNAI, established in 2011, is one of the newest universities.

The University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) introduced the impact factor system in 2006 to appraise academic performance and contributions of academic staff members; the system was suspended based on stiff opposition by the academics. The impact factor was incorporated into the UNN's "Yellow Book" in December 2007. It specified the guidelines for appointments and promotions of academics. In addition to the impact factor, the weighting factor to multiply the raw score of any publication/work arrived at from the Yellow Book was introduced. As specified in the "Yellow Book", an academic was expected to have a minimum of 2, 5, and 8 impact factor-ranked journals to be promoted to Senior Lecturer, Reader, and Professor respectively (Okoye, 2010). Omonijo *et al.* (2015) predicted that the use of impact factor journals, especially those indexed in Thomson Reuters (now Clarivate Analytics) and Scopus' SCImago, as a promotion criterion for academic staff members, is likely to become dominant in Nigerian public universities since some private universities have started assessing and promoting their academic staff members based on high impact factor journals; warned staff desirous of academic greatness to avoid vulnerability to scammers or hijacked journals.

Rather than relying completely on Clarivate Analytics and Scopus-ranked journals as a major promotion or assessment criterion for academic staff members, departments or fields of research, faculties, and institutions can determine or develop their standards of measuring the impact of their research output. For instance, the Washington University-based Backer Medical Library in St. Louis developed a model for faculty to assess the impact of their research based on three community benefits, which include economic outcomes indicated by a cost-effective intervention for a disease, condition or disorder; health care outcomes as

reflected in clinically effective approach in the management and treatment of a disease, disorder or condition; and enhancement of quality of life (Becker Medical Library, 2009).

Okoye's (2010) study the use of impact factors for the assessment of academic staff members in the Nigerian academic firmament, particularly among academic librarians in UNN. This present study examined the discernment of academic staff members on impact factor-ranked journals and academic performance in the Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Related to Okoye's study in some ways, this study investigates the academics' perception of national-based or foreign journals and the perception of academics toward the use of impact factors either as a drive towards academic excellence or an instrument for stagnation.

Arguments for and against Impact Factor

The use of impact factor to assess and promote scholars have been supported because it calculates citation counts, which measure and evaluate various aspects of scholarly work and research products (Cole 2000, Cronin 2001, Yang & Meho 2006; West *et al.,* 2010, Kear & Colbert-Lewis 2011, Borgman 2015, Agarwal *et al.* 2016) gives researchers high visibility, wide citations, and global recognition (Weingart 2005, Shiwani 2006, Adler & Harzing 2009, Aina 2010) and is greatly valuable, widely used, and the best simple tool for comparing and evaluating research output (Hook 1999, Neuberger & Counsel 2002, Gunn, 2004). However, the impact factor has been criticized because it undermines the scholarship that matters (Adler and Harzing, 2009). Citations are a shallow measure of research quality or impact (Lillis and Curry 2010, Qiu 2010, Carpenter *et al*. 2014). Citation count is misconceived as an objective quantitative indicator of scientific success (West *et al*. 2010, Agarwal *et al*. 2016). Citation counts do not take into consideration the subject field; the number of citations is heavily influenced by both the discipline and the period used to collect the data (Bornmann & Marx, 2015), it is manipulatable (Moya-Anegón *et al*., 2007) and prone to bias (van Leeuwen *et al.*, 2001, Bordons *et al*. 2002, Agarwal *et al*. 2016) and most high impact factor indexed journals publish more articles written in the English language from English-speaking countries than those written in other languages (Smeyers & Levering 1998, Levering & Smeyers 2009, Lillis & Curry 2000, 2010). Brunner-Ried & Salazar-Muñiz (2012) observed that only 11.6 % of the journals in the Web of Science publish in languages other than English.

Impact factor journals can be manipulated to yield a high impact factor. Certain factors, which influence increased citation of publications, include the number of references (publications with a higher number of references receive more citations) (Carpenter *et al*., 2014), publishing of more review papers (Sevinc, 2004), study design (Patsopoulos *et al*., 2005), data sharing (Piwowar *et al*., 2007), industry funding (Dunn *et al*., 2012), mentorship (Holliday *et al*., 2014), mixed-gender authorship (Campbell *et al*., 2013), and a journal's policy encouraging authors to cite other articles already published by the same journal

(Englander, 2014). Also, journals that publish more articles and disciplines have many more journals and can obtain higher impact factors than smaller and highly specialized journals, thereby undermining a true reflection of the journal's influence or importance (Englander, 2014). Once these factors are present in a published paper, they may increase its citation counts.

Based on the criticism, scholars (Cathey & Kader, 2004; Chong, 2004; Eston, 2004; Harnard, 2004; Romon, 2004; Dong *et al.,* 2005; Scully & Lodge, 2005; Bridges, 2011) have condemned the attitude of using impact factor to evaluate individual scientific achievement for promotion by some institutions and committees. Bridges (2011) has warned that a particular criterion in determining a journal's impact factor is dangerous. It is misleading to conclude that only journals or publications ranked in Clarivate Analytics and Scopus yield better output or high impact. Citation measures may be inaccurate, misleading for interpretation; non-experts may use them in evaluating research quality and performance inappropriately (van Raan, 2005).

Using impact factors to evaluate individuals (for hiring, tenure, and grant entitlement) and academic departments and institutions is a deviation from the original intent of impact factors (Englander, 2014). Thus, the insistence or reliance of young researchers on impact factor journals for their tenure and promotion ultimately stifles the diffusion of ideas or knowledge and academic dialogue that would be better enhanced and appreciated if they were published in specialized papers with low impact factor (Segalla, 2008 cited in Adler & Harzing, 2009:75). Lamentably, this insistence is coming at a time when scientific publishing in Nigeria is characterized with challenges or problems which according to Ajao and Ugwu (2011), include financial constraints, poor quality of some articles published, problems of journal assessment, limited experience of journal editors and assessors in journal publishing, problems of journal indexing, and the reaction of authors to rejected articles. Continuing, the authors noted that for journals in Nigeria and other African countries to survive or sustain, they resort to three methods: the organization that owns the journal levies all members of the organization to make financial contributions annually; the editorial board charges publication fee on every accepted manuscript before the papers are published; and the editorial board charges non-refundable assessment fee on every manuscript even before it is assessed. Nigerian universities can take proactive steps to overcome these challenges associated with scientific publishing or adopt Amin's (1976, 1997, 2003) theory of de-linking, which encourages countries of the periphery to withdraw from their exploitative integration in the global economy and rather device peculiar ways of handling their peculiar challenges independent of the developed societies and their agents of globalization.

'Delinking' seeks to create self-reliance in practice and reality among the peoples of the South through greater South-South cooperation. Delinking theory finds its expression in questioning global inequalities and injustices and implementing radical solutions (Ransby, 2003). Based on the foregoing, academic institutions and professional bodies in developing countries should develop appropriate peculiar ways of appraising academic performance and promoting academic staff members rather than insisting on impact factor ranking from the

"center". This insistence on Western-ranked journals is seemingly a colonial hangover. While those who insist on the Western-ranked impact factor journals argue that it is a drive towards academic excellence, a majority opinion sees this insistence as an instrument for stagnating academics, especially by those who have climbed the academic ladder. Journals by institution, faculty, and department can be strengthened to have a high impact factor and used as equivalent to Western-based impact factor journals.

It is ridiculous for some Nigerian universities to treat or reject journals such as the Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology and Ife Psychologia as not having a high impact factor when these journals can compete favorably with similar journals elsewhere. The denigration or rejection is simply because these journals are published in Nigeria as if others venerated as high impact factor journals in Nigeria are not country-based or institution-based. The attitude suggests that Nigeria (and Africa) is suffering from a "colonial hangover". These Nigerian universities and their management have not made appreciable or commendable efforts to establish impact factor journals in their institutions. Yet, they insist on the impact factor system for appraisal and promotion of academic staff members and fail to realize that stagnate academic growth.

The insistence on impact factor ranked journals by some institutions or organizations has made some scholars become victims of fake or hijacked journals. Thus, Omonijo *et al*. (2015) have sensitized Nigerian scholars to the proliferation of hijacked journals, especially journals pretending or claiming to be indexed in Thomson Reuters and Scopus's SCImago. The scholars based on secondary data, identified and listed an array of these dubious or hijacked impact factor journals and guided scholars on how to identify these journals and avoid publishing in them. Interestingly, these journals can be identified through the following factors: rapid publication promise, the publisher being the same as the editorial board, lack of transparency about the publisher, lack of coherence in content and scope, copycat names, and false claims of index databases. Also, the scholars brought to the fore some of the consequences of publishing in such dubious or hijacked journals, including wasting resources or money, denting academic integrity, termination of appointment, anxiety and psychological stress, and loss of patronage.

Finally, Harrington (1997) talked about the "fallacy of universal best practices" to drive home that what may be best practices for one organization may be disastrous for another. A review of one of the world's largest international management practice databases indicated that there were only five practices considered universal best practices, and even there was only a small chance (5%) that these approaches would benefit an organization's performance, depending on whether it is a low, medium or a high performing organization, thereby proving that there is no single hypothetical universal best practice that applies to all organizations which strive to improve (Harrington, 1997). Thus, it is in the interest of organizations or institutions to develop and adopt practices that best work for them.

METHODS AND PARTICIPANTS

Based on a survey design, through a 46-item structured questionnaire administered to ninety-three (93) randomly-selected respondents (mainly academic staff members) in the Alex-Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State (hereafter referred to as AE-FUNAI) data for the study were generated.

AE-FUNAI is one of the universities established by President Jonathan Goodluck's administration in 2011. Located in Ikwo, Ebonyi State, the institution has seemingly brought succour and relief because of its capacity to reduce unemployment, poverty and solve the admission problems of Nigerians. Expectedly, employees, especially academic staff members, have nursed the hope of steady career growth in a newly established university where events should supposedly be fast-tracked. However, the use of impact factors for appraisal of academic performance and determination of promotion, tenure, or pay has been greeted with criticism. While some see the development as a drive towards academic excellence, others view it as an instrument for stagnation. These opinions from participants/respondents (data) have been analysed using descriptive statistics, especially tables, frequency counts and simple percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondents were 64 males and 29 females. Among the respondents used in the study, 6 were Graduate Assistants, 47 were Assistant Lecturers, 11 were Lecturer II, 10 were Lecturer I, 13 were Senior Lecturers, 2 were Readers/Associate Professors, and 4 were Professors. The respondents (74.2%) had worked for a period between 1-4 years, 16 respondents (17.2%) were still newly employed and had worked for less than 1 year, and only 8 respondents (8.6%) had worked for 5 and above years (Table 1).

Almost all the respondents (95.7%) agreed that they are aware of the university's policy and insistence on impact factors journals for the assessment and promotion of academic staff members (Table 1). Certain factors militate against effective research in Nigerian universities (Table 2). All the respondents agreed that poor infrastructural facilities in the university do not encourage research and researchers are exposed to poor library facilities. The majority (97.8%) accepted that research is poorly funded in the university, whereas only 2.2% did not accept it. Also, all the respondents believed it costs money and time to carry out and publish quality research. The majority of respondents (97.9%) think lecturers are not well remunerated; only 2.1% did not accept the view. According to the respondents, most lecturers in the university do not have offices; available offices for lecturers are not well equipped. Finally, 90.3% of the respondents accepted that the university environment is not conducive for research due to a lack of learning and research facilities whereas 9.7% did not accept the view. These findings corroborate Okoye (2010) and Ajao and Ugwu (2011).

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Opinion of respondents concerning local journal publications were sought and reported (see Table 3). While 85% of the respondents accepted that the primary focus of Nigerian scholars is to address and solve local problems through research and publications, 15% did not accept; 90.3% accepted the view that it is good for Nigerian scholars to use and publish in available local journals and only 9.7% did not accept the view. 82.8% accepted that local journals address local development issues better than Western journals and 17.2% did not accept the view. 77.4% accepted that publishing in local journals contributes to national development than publishing in Western-based journals, while 22.6% did not accept the view. Also, 87.1% rejected the view that publishing in local journals makes one a local champion and only 12.9% accepted it; 61.3% accepted that publishing in local journals encourages steady growth in the system and 38.7% did not accept the view; 51.8% were of the view that many Nigerian scholars are no longer willing to publish in local or Nigerian-based journals, but 48.2% did not accept this view, 62.3% accepted that local journals have wide national coverage and 37.6% did not accept the view, 56% viewed local journals as not having adequate quality control or peer review but 44.1% viewed local journals as having adequate quality control or peer review. However, 59.1% viewed local journals as encouraging or enhancing high-quality publications and 40.9% viewed local journals as not encouraging or enhancing high-quality publications. These findings are in tandem with Okoye's (2010) findings.

Respondents' opinions concerning impact factor journals were sought and reported (see Table 4). 65.6% did not accept that many Nigerian scholars are reluctant to publish in impact factor or international journals and 34.4% accepted the view. 71% accepted that impact factor journals demand much higher standards of scholarship, but 29% did not accept the view. The majority of the respondents (84.9%) believed that it is costly to publish in impact factor or Western-based journals, while 15.1% did not accept the view that it is costly to publish in impact factor or Western journals; 73.1% did not accept that publishing in impact factor or Western journals is free and costs no dime, but 26.9% accepted the view. The majority of the respondents (77.4%) were of the view that impacts factor journals and editors discriminate against research work carried out on purely local issues, but 22.6% disagreed with such a view; 60.2% of the respondents accepted that research on local issues is usually of no interest to foreign/western journals and publishers, but 39.8% thought otherwise.

The view that publishing in Western or impact factor journals gives one a sense of pride and satisfaction was accepted by 87.1% of the respondents but rejected by 12.9%. The majority of respondents (89.2%) accepted that those who publish in Western journals are not better or more intelligent than those who publish locally, but 10.8% thought otherwise. The view that Western or impact factor journals have higher international coverage was accepted by 79.6% but rejected by 20.4% of the respondents. The view that Western or impact factor journals encourage or enhance high-quality publications was accepted by 74.2% and rejected by 25.8%. The view that Western or impact factor journals do not have adequate quality control or peer review was rejected by 61.3% of the respondents but rejected by 38.7%. The

view that Western or impact factor journals are not the only objective measure for academic sagacity was accepted by 91.4% but rejected by only 8.6%.

Respondents' views concerning the nexus between impact factor journals and the promotion of academic staff were sought and reported (Table 5). As 53.8% of the respondents did not accept that insistence on impact factor journals for the assessment and promotion of academic staff should be encouraged, 46.2% accepted the view. The view that the insistence of university management on impact factor journals for assessment and promotion of academic staff encourages staff growth was rejected by 59.2% of the respondents but rejected by 40.8%. They view that the insistence of university management on the use of impact factor journals for assessment and promotion of academic staff stagnates staff growth was accepted by the respondents (77.4%) but rejected by 22.6%.

Also, a majority of the respondents (89.2%) accepted that the promotion of academic staff has been delayed because of the insistence of university management on the use of impact factor journals for the assessment and promotion of academic staff, but only 10.8% did not accept this view; 60.2% of the respondents disliked the university's policy of using highly ranked Western journals for assessment and promotion of academic staff while 39.8% liked the policy. Majority of the respondents (74.2%) accepted that local journals should take predominance over impact factor journals in the assessment and promotion of academic staff, but 25.8% rejected such a view.

Similarly, some respondents (74.2%) accepted that institution-based journals should take predominance in the assessment and promotion of academic staff, but 25.8% did not accept such a view. The view that Western journals should take predominance in the assessment and promotion of academic staff was rejected by the respondents (77.4%) but accepted by 22.6%. The view that departments and faculties should be allowed to indicate local journals that should be highly rated and used for assessment and promotion of academic staff was overwhelmingly accepted by 82.8% of the respondents, but rejected by only 17.2%. Finally, 66.7% of the respondents accepted that greater emphasis on publications in Western-indexed journals discourages classroom teaching, but 33.3% did not accept such a view. The emphasis on impact factor ranked journals for assessment and promotion of academic staff makes some lecturers focus less on teaching, especially where teaching output is grossly neglected (or given minimal attention) in appraisal and promotion in the Nigerian university system.

That Nigerian universities have serious challenges that affect their performance is no longer news; it has been adequately publicized by Okoye (2010), Ajao & Ugwu (2011), Ibiam & Agha (2015) and Aina (2016). In particular, underfunding is a problem facing Nigerian universities and research (Ajayi & Ekundayo 2006, Akpan & Afangidehi 2009, Kalama *et al.* 2012, Ahmed & Nwalo 2013, Akinyemi 2013 and Ibiam & Agha 2015). The employment of pragmatic measures in sourcing funds for the running and development of their institutions by Nigerian universities has been suggested as a strategic option to overcome inadequate funding (Ibiam & Agha, 2016). These pragmatic sources of funding include endowment funds where rich citizens assist in the development of quality education;

launching and appeal funds; award of Honorary Degrees; research, contracts, and other services; part-time, remedial, and long-vacation programs; Alumni Association; private contributions from big organizations; contribution by Parents/Teachers Association (PTA); and contribution by staff, among others (Lawal, 2013).

As reported by Aina (2016), the proportion of journals published by Nigerian researchers in Thomson Reuters' Web of Science and Scopus is 2.3%and 12.2 % respectively even though there were about 140 universities as of 2015 and thousands of professors in Nigeria. Implicitly, research output by Nigerian scholars which is captured in frontline databases is lamentably low. To remedy this low research output, the author suggested the creation of a national research orgaimprove funding of research, the establishment of academies in the various disciplines, regular training of editors to improve scholarly journals, encouragement of researchers, and promotion of groundbreaking research projects.

Articles/journals from developing countries, including Nigeria, are biased against and suffer a high rejection rate of about 40-45% of many impact factor-ranked journals (Hernon & Schwartz, 2005; Shiwani, 2006). Lamentably, scholars in Africa are jeopardized and short-changed; there are few impact factor-ranked journals in Africa and other developing societies (Chiejina, 2006). Based on these constraints, it is disadvantageous to use or rely on impact factors journals in appraising researchers' academic performance (Okoye, 2010) and determining their promotion or pay packages in Nigeria.

To overcome the constraints in Nigeria, scholars must popularise their ideas and statuses. Thus, as recommended by Okoye (2010), the challenges can only be overcome through the provision of adequate internet access in Nigerian universities, preference/provision of adequate electronic journals in university libraries, conducive reading and learning environment in university libraries, adequate interactive workshops, and training on impact factor publishing in Nigerian universities, steady power supply, and adequate funding of research and human capital development.

However, since Nigerian universities are still battling with these challenges, this paper agrees with the viable submission of Okoye (2010) that instead of using impact factor for assessing academic performance and promoting academics, articles/papers should rather be sent to about three assessors (chosen nationally or internationally) in the researcher's field of specialization and be given a double-blind assessment by the assessors, and positive reports from two of the three assessors should be accepted for promotion of the researcher. Interestingly too, Seglen (1997) has cautioned against the use of journals' impact factors to evaluate scientific research.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

That impact factor is now well entrenched in scientific publishing as a measure of research output is undeniable. However, the insistence of some academic institutions or organizations on the use of impact factors for appraisal of academic performance and determination of promotion, tenure, or pay, especially in Nigeria, has been greeted with criticisms. This study

has critically examined the role of the impact factor as a drive toward academic excellence or as an instrument for the stagnation of academic staff in a Nigerian university. In this study, factors militating against effective research in the University include poor infrastructural facilities, poor library facilities, poor research funding, poor remuneration of lecturers, lack of offices for academics, ill-equipped offices, and lack of learning/research facilities. Tackling some of these problems by the school management would motivate academics to contribute meaningfully to research and development (R&D).

Western or impact factor journals have international coverage, give one a sense of pride and satisfaction, and enhance high-quality publications; they are not the only objective measure for academic sagacity. Therefore, the insistence of some academic institutions on impact factor journals as the only means of assessing and promoting academics should be discouraged. Nigerians should be encouraged to publish in local and institution-based journals because local journals address local development issues better than Western journals and make publications easily accessible to Nigerians.

The tendency of impact factor journals and editors to discriminate against research work carried out on purely African (regional) or local (Nigerian) issues should encourage African universities to adopt peculiar means of assessing and promoting their lecturers in addition to impact factor journals and encourage their academics to publish in local journals and thus contribute to national development. As shown in this study, the insistence of university management on impact factor journals for the assessment and promotion of academic staff stagnates staff growth rather than promotes it. Emphasis on publications in Western-based journals discourages classroom teaching; some lecturers focus less on teaching, especially where teaching output is grossly neglected (or given minimal attention) in appraisal and promotion in the Nigerian university system.

As a solution, departments and faculties should indicate local journals that should be highly rated and used for the evaluation of their academic staff. On a final note, it is apparent that the University Vice Chancellors insist on Thomson Reuter and Scimago-ranked journals to the detriment of African-based ranked journals and researchers. It is high time the University devised practical and strategic ways of assessing and promoting academics in addition to impact factor journals. However, embarking on floating impact factor journals by African institutions should be encouraged.

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APPENDICES

Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents

Socio-demographics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	64	68.8
	Female	29	31.2
	Total	93	100.0
Marital Status	Single	27	29.0
	Married	59	63.4
	Divorced	2	2.2
	Separated	5	5.4
	Total	93	100.0
Designation/Rank	Graduate Assistant	6	6.5
	Assistant Lecturer	47	50.5
	Lecturer II	11	11.8
	Lecturer I	10	10.8
	Senior Lecturer	13	14.0
	Reader/Ass. Prof.	2	2.2
	Professor	4	4.3
	Total	93	100.0
Tenure/Length of Service	Less than 1 year	16	17.2
	1- 4 years	69	74.2
	5 years and above	8	8.6
	Total	93	100.0
Awareness of university's policy and insistence on the use of impact factor for assessment and promotion of academic staff	Yes	89	95.7
	No	4	4.3
	Total	93	100.0

Table 2: Factors against effective research and publishing in a Nigerian university (n = 93)

S/N	Factors against effective research and publishing in Nigerian universities	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Poor infrastructural facilities in Nigerian universities do not encourage research	-	-	32 (34.4%)	61 (65.6%)
2	Researchers are incapacitated by poor library facilities in Nigerian universities	-	-	31 (33.3%)	62 (66.7%)
3	Research is poorly funded in Nigerian universities	-	2 (2.2%)	42 (45.2%)	49 (52.7%)
4	It costs a lot of money to carry out and publish a quality research	-	-	40 (43.0%)	53 (57.0%)
5	Lecturers are inadequately remunerated (paid)	-	2 (2.2%)	29 (31.2%)	62 (66.7%)
6	Some lecturers do not have offices	-	-	9 (9.7%)	84 (90.3%)
7	Available offices for lecturers are not adequately equipped	-	2 (2.2%)	12 (12.9%)	79 (84.9%)
8	University environment is not conducive for research due to lack of learning/research facilities	9 (9.7%)	19 (20.4%)	40 (43.0%)	25 (26.9%)

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Table 3: Opinions on Local or Nigerian-based Journals (n = 93)

S/N	Statements on local journal publications	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9	The primary focus of Nigerian scholars is to address and solve local problems through research and publications	3 (3.2%)	11 (11.8%)	29 (31.2%)	50 (53.8%)
10	It is good for Nigerian scholars to use and publish in available local journals	-	9 (9.7%)	51 (54.8%)	33 (35.5%)
11	Local journals address local development issues better than Western journals	4 (4.3%)	12 (12.9%)	21 (22.6%)	56 (60.2%)
12	Publishing in local journals contributes much to national development than publishing in Western journals	2 (2.2%)	19 (20.4%)	17 (18.3%)	55 (59.1%)
13	Publishing in local journals makes one a local champion	48 (51.6%)	33 (35.5%)	4 (4.3%)	8 (8.6%)
14	Publishing in local journals encourages steady growth in the system	11 (11.8%)	25 (26.9%)	36 (38.7%)	21 (22.6%)
15	Many Nigerian scholars are no longer willing to publish in local or Nigerian-based journals	20 (21.5%)	31 (33.3%)	24 (25.8%)	18 (19.4%)
16	Local journals have wide national coverage	14 (15.1%)	21 (22.6%)	35 (37.6%)	23 (24.7%)
17	Local journals do not have adequate quality control or peer review	9 (9.7%)	43 (46.2%)	28 (30.1%)	13 (14.0%)
18	Local journals encourage or enhance high quality publications	9 (9.7%)	29 (31.2%)	43 (46.2%)	12 (12.9%)

Table 4: Opinions on International or Impact Factor Journals (n = 93)

S/N	Statements on impact factor journals	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
19	Many Nigerian scholars are reluctant to publish in impact factor or international journals	31 (33.3%)	30 (32.3%)	24 (25.8%)	8 (8.6%)
20	Impact factor journals demand much higher standards of scholarship	3 (3.2%)	24 (25.8%)	28 (30.1%)	38 (40.9%)
21	It is costly to publish in impact factor or Western journals	10 (10.8%)	3 (4.3%)	36 (38.7%)	43 (46.2%)
22	Publishing in impact factor or Western journals is free and costs no dime	31 (33.3%)	37 (39.8%)	15 (16.1%)	10 (10.8%)
23	Impact factor journals and editors discriminate against research work carried out on purely local issues	4 (4.3%)	17 (18.3%)	41 (44.1%)	31 (33.3%)
24	Research on local issues is usually of no interest to foreign/western journals and publishers.	2 (2.2%)	35 (37.6%)	37 (39.8%)	19 (20.4%)
25	Publishing in Western or impact factor journals gives one a sense of pride and satisfaction	3 (3.2%)	9 (9.7%)	49 (52.7%)	32 (34.4%)
26	Those who publish in western or impact factor journals are not better or more intelligent than those who publish locally	4 (4.3%)	6 (6.5%)	40 (43.0%)	43 (46.2%)
27	Western or impact factor journals have wide international coverage	4 (4.3%)	15 (16.1%)	37 (39.8%)	37 (39.8%)
28	Western or impact factor journals encourage or enhance high quality publications	4 (4.3%)	20 (21.5%)	42 (45.2%)	27 (29.0%)
29	Western or impact factor journals do not have adequate quality control or peer review	24 (25.8%)	33 (35.5%)	31 (33.3%)	5 (5.4%)
30	Western or impact factor journals are not the only objective measure for academic sagacity	4 (4.3%)	4 (4.3%)	41 (44.1%)	44 (47.3%)

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Table 5: Opinions on Impact Factor Journals and Promotion of Academic Staff (n = 93)

S/N	Impact Factor Journals and Promotion of Academic Staff	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
31	Insistence on the use of impact factor journals for assessment and promotion of academic staff is good and should be encouraged	16 (17.2%)	34 (36.6%)	27 (29.0%)	16 (17.2%)
32	Insistence of university management on the use of impact factor journals for assessment and promotion of academic staff encourages staff growth	21 (22.6%)	34 (36.6%)	19 (20.4%)	19 (20.4%)
33	Insistence of university management on the use of impact factor journals for assessment and promotion of academic staff stagnates staff growth	4 (4.3%)	17 (18.3%)	35 (37.6%)	37 (39.8%)
34	Promotion of academic staff has been delayed because of the insistence of university management on the use of impact factor journals for assessment and promotion of academic staff	8 (8.6%)	2 (2.2%)	28 (30.1%)	55 (59.1%)
35	I like the university's policy of using highly ranked western or impact factor journals for assessment and promotion of academic staff	24 (25.8%)	32 (34.4%)	17 (18.3%)	20 (21.5%)
36	Local journals should take predominance in the assessment and promotion of academic staff	-	24 (25.8%)	50 (53.8%)	19 (20.4%)
37	Institution-based journals should take predominance in the assessment and promotion of academic staff	11 (11.8%)	13 (14.0%)	49 (52.7%)	20 (21.5%)
38	Western journals should take predominance in the assessment and promotion of academic staff	35 (37.6%)	37 (39.8%)	15 (16.1%)	6 (6.5%)
39	Departments and faculties should be given opportunity to indicate local journals that should be highly rated and used for assessment and promotion of academic staff	8 (8.6%)	8 (8.6%)	26 (28.0%)	51 (54.8%)
40	Greater emphasis on publications in western or impact factor indexed journals discourages classroom teaching	15 (16.1%)	16 (17.2%)	38 (40.9%)	24 (25.8%)